

POINTER

Season 2013/2014

ISSUE 4



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Britain's champion
woman rider

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The latest news, how the sport is put together, kit test,
social media insight, feeding to win, fixtures,
hunters' chases, pony racing and much more



Pointer – the very best of the sport on the eve of the new season

2013/14 Point-to-Point Fixtures



DECEMBER

01	Black Forest Club,	Black Forest Lodge
01	Cambridge University United Hunts Club,	Cottenham
08	Point-To-Point Owners & Riders Club,	Barbury Racecourse
15	Cornwall Hunt Club,	Wadebridge
15	Ratcheugh Racing Club,	Alnwick
27	Harkaway Club,	Chaddesley Corbett
29	Cambridgeshire Harriers Hunt Club,	Cottenham

JANUARY

05	Larkhill Racing Club,	Larkhill
05	North Cornwall,	Wadebridge
12	Dunston Harriers,	Ampton
12	Heythrop Nr Cirencester,	Cocklebarrow (New Course)
12	Silverton,	Black Forest Lodge
12	Yorkshire Area Point-To-Point Club,	Sheriff Hutton
19	Tiverton,	Chibley Park
19	West Percy,	Alnwick
25	Royal Artillery,	Larkhill
25	South Durham Farmers Club,	Mordon
26	Jedforest,	Friars Haugh
26	North Norfolk Harriers,	Higham
26	South Midlands Area Club,	Whitfield

FEBRUARY

02	Burton,	North Carlton
02	Cambridgeshire With Enfield Chace,	Horseheath
02	Mid Devon,	Black Forest Lodge
02	South Dorset,	Milborne St Andrew
08	Cambridge University Draghounds,	Cottenham
08	Combined Services,	Larkhill
08	Western,	Wadebridge
09	Albrighton,	Chaddesley Corbett
09	Dumfriesshire & Stewartry,	Overton
09	South Wold,	Brocklesby Park
16	Midlands Area Club,	Thorpe Lodge
16	Percy,	Alnwick
16	Sinnington,	Duncombe Park
16	South Pool Harriers,	Buckfastleigh
16	Vine & Craven,	Barbury Racecourse
16	Waveney Harriers,	Higham
22	North Hereford,	Whitwick Manor
23	Blankney,	North Carlton
23	Countryside Alliance Club (Wessex),	Badbury Rings
23	Curre & Llangibby,	Howick
23	East Anglian Hunts Club,	Marks Tey
23	East Cornwall,	Great Trethew
23	South East Hunts Club,	Charing

MARCH

01	Duke Of Beaufort's,	Didmorton
01	East Devon,	Bishops Court
01	Thurlow,	Horseheath
02	Cottesmore,	Garthorpe
02	Quantock Staghouads,	Cothelstone
02	Ross Harriers,	Garnons
02	Tynedale,	Corbridge
02	West Of Yore,	Whitcliffe Grange
08	Brecon & Talybont,	Llanfrynach
08	Kingston Blount Racing Club,	Kingston Blount
09	Blackmore & Sparkford Vale,	Charlton Horethorne
09	College Valley & North Northumberland,	Alnwick
09	Derwent,	Charm Park
09	Dulverton Farmers,	Treborough Hill
09	Mid Surrey Farmers Drag,	Godstone
09	Sir Ww. Wynn's,	Bangor-On-Dee
09	Suffolk,	Ampton
15	Duke Of Buccleuch's,	Friars Haugh

15	New Forest,	Larkhill
16	Bicester With Whaddon Chase,	Whitfield
16	Curre & Llangibby,	Howick
16	Dart Vale & Haldon Harriers,	Buckfastleigh
16	East Essex,	Marks Tey
16	Holderness,	Dalton Park
16	South Herefordshire,	Garnons
22	Crawley & Horsham,	Parham
22	Glamorgan,	Ystradowen
22	Hurworth,	Hutton Ruddy
22	Lanarkshire & Renfrewshire And Eglinton,	Overton
22	V.W.H.,	Siddington
22	Wilton,	Milborne St Andrew
23	Sun Brocklesby,	Brocklesby Park
23	Croome & West Warwickshire,	Upton-Upon-Severn
23	Hampshire,	Hackwood Park
23	Holcombe Club,	Whittington
23	Lamerton,	Kilworthy
23	Mendip Farmers,	Ston Easton
23	Oakley,	Brafield-On-The-Green
29	Avon Vale,	Larkhill
29	Berwickshire,	Friars Haugh
29	Monmouthshire,	Llanvapley
29	Puckeridge,	Horseheath
29	Teme Valley,	Brampton Bryan
30	Badsworth & Bramham Moor,	Whitcliffe Grange
30	Belvoir,	Garthorpe
30	Cotley,	Cotley
30	East Cornwall,	Great Trethew
30	Flint & Denbigh,	Bangor-On-Dee
30	Ledbury,	Maisemore Park
30	Southdown & Eridge,	Godstone

20	Cleveland,	Mordon
21	Braes Of Derwent,	Corbridge
21	Bank Holiday East Kent,	Aldington
21	Mon Four Burrow,	Trebudannon
21	Bank Holiday North Cotswold,	Paxford
21	North Shropshire,	Eyton-On-Severn
21	Old Berkshire,	Lockinge
21	South Notts,	Thorpe Lodge
21	South Pembrokeshire,	Lydstep
21	Staintondale,	Sheriff Hutton
21	Taunton Vale Harriers & Foxhounds,	Kingston St Mary
21	Vine & Craven,	Hackwood Park
26	Berkeley,	Woodford
26	Chiddingfold, Leconfield & Cowdray,	Parham
26	Farmers Bloodhounds,	Whitfield
26	Fife,	Balcormo Mains
26	United Pack,	Brampton Bryan
27	Axe Vale,	Stafford Cross
27	Cheshire,	Tabley
27	Quorn,	Garthorpe
27	Tivyside And Carmarthenshire,	Lydstep
27	York & Ainsty,	Easingwold

MAY

03	Modbury Harriers,	Flete Park
03	Pendle Forest & Craven,	Heslaker
03	Surrey Union,	Peper Harow
03	Tredegar Farmers,	Lower Machen
04	Devon & Somerset Staghouads,	Holnicote
04	Fernie,	Dingley
04	Lauderdale,	Mosshouses
04	Radnor & West Hereford,	Cold Harbour
05	Banwen Miners,	Pentreclwydau
05	Bank Holiday Cattistock,	Littlewindsor
05	Enfield Chace With Cambridgeshire,	Northaw
05	North Ledbury,	Maisemore Park
05	South Shropshire,	Eyton-On-Severn
05	Stevenstone,	Vauterhill
05	Warwickshire,	Mollington
05	Zetland,	Witton Castle
10	Cumberland,	Aspatria
10	Kimblewick,	Kingston Blount
10	Minehead Harriers and West Somerset,	Holnicote
11	Bilsdale,	Easingwold
11	Four Burrow,	Trebudannon
11	Wheatland,	Chaddesley Corbett
14	Weston & Banwell Harriers,	Cothelstone (Evening)
17	Clifton-On-Teme,	Upper Sapey
17	Gelligaer Farmers,	Lower Machen
17	South Durham,	Mordon
18	Border,	Hexham
18	Dulverton West,	Bratton Down
18	Golden Valley,	Bredwardine
18	Grafton,	Whitfield
18	Knutsford Races Club,	Tabley
18	Melton Hunt Club,	Garthorpe
18	West Norfolk,	Fakenham
25	Berks & Bucks Drag and Sandhurst Drag,	Kingston Blount
25	Fitzwilliam (Milton),	Dingley
25	Pembrokeshire,	Trecoed
26	Albrighton Woodland,	Chaddesley Corbett
26	Bank Holiday South Tetcott,	Upcott Cross

APRIL

05	Essex,	High Easter
05	North Warwickshire Hunt Club,	Mollington
05	Seavington,	Littlewindsor
06	Cheshire Forest,	Tabley
06	Cotswold,	Andoversford
06	East Sussex & Romney Marsh,	Charing
06	Middleton,	Whitwell-On-The-Hill
06	Morpeth,	Tranwell
06	Portman,	Badbury Rings
06	Pytchley,	Gullsborough
06	Spooners & West Dartmoor,	Cherrybrook
06	Tedworth,	Barbury Racecourse
06	West Wales Area Club,	Lydstep
12	Bedale,	Hornby Castle
12	Cumberland Farmers,	Dalston
12	Kimblewick,	Kingston Blount
12	Ludlow,	Bitterley
12	Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent,	Penshurst
12	West Somerset Vale,	Cothelstone
12	Ystrad Taf Fechan,	Ystradowen
13	Atherstone,	Clifton-On-Dunsmore
13	Cotswold Vale Farmers,	Andoversford
13	Eggesford,	Upcott Cross
13	Hursley Hambledon,	Larkhill
19	Ashford Valley,	Charing
19	Easter Dartmoor,	Flete Park
19	Essex & Suffolk,	Higham
19	Kimblewick,	Kimble
19	Llangeinor,	Pyle
19	North Staffordshire,	Sandon
19	South & West Wilts,	Larkhill
19	Vale Of Lune,	Whittington
19	Woodland Pytchley,	Dingley
19	Worcestershire,	Chaddesley Corbett

Highlighted meetings are staging the new Thoroughbred Breeders' Association mares series of races

Here's to a brave horse . . .



Welcome to the fourth annual edition of Pointer magazine, which, as the new season approaches, is point-to-pointing's way of saying – here is our sport!

All the organisational elements that create six and a half months of racing 'between the flags' are referred to or make a contribution to these pages, and there is news to update you and features to remind you of last season's highlights and what is to come.

Point-to-pointing has not been immune to a raft of pressures – economic downturn, changes in the countryside's demographic, squeezes on the hunts that organise so many of the meetings, and, let us not forget two harsh winters – but it remains a uniquely brilliant sport.

Time and again I have spoken to people with a love of robust adventure, and heard them say, 'There is nothing like riding in a point-to-point'. The frisson of pre-race tension and excitement, the admiration for a brave horse who 'keeps coming up' as the fences flick past, a glow as you land safely over the last, a sense of satisfaction at a job well done – it is a package of delights that cannot be bottled.

Of course, the majority of people who attend a point-to-point have never ridden in a race, and some will not have sat on a horse. Their pleasure comes in experiencing a good day out in the countryside, of following favourite stables, horses and riders, by having a bet or merely enjoying a social get together and a picnic.

If you have never been before – come point-to-pointing. Pointer hopes to whet your appetite, www.pointtopoint.co.uk can provide more information as the season flows.

Carl Evans

Carl Evans
Editor

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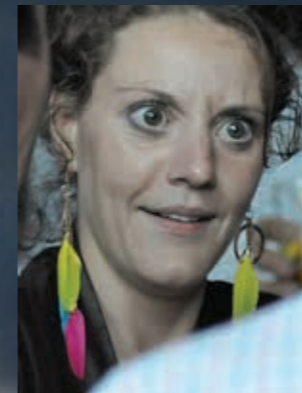
Front Cover: John Grossick Photography

The many faces of Jacqueline

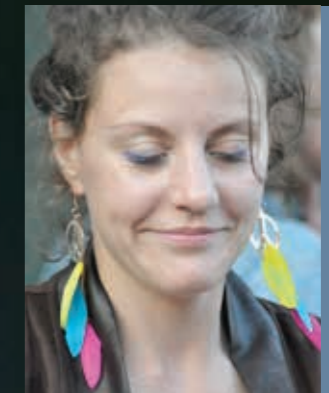
Britain's champion woman rider



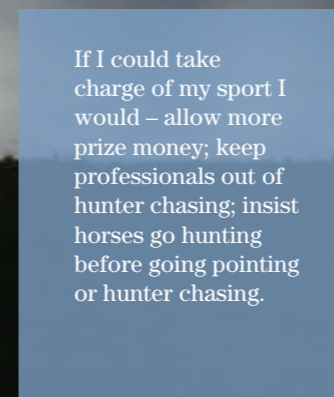
Jacqueline Coward. Age 28. Born & bred Yorkshire – a member of the Easterby family. Lives in **Seackleton**, with parents Ralph and Cherry, and sister Sam. **British women's champion 2012/13** – 25 winners. **Runner-up 2011/12** – 16 winners. Fine achievements: **First Yorkshire woman to be British champion; winner of 2012 AGA ladies' championship final** on Amicelli



I'm not frightened easily, but I had a terrifying experience driving a car-load of people back from Beverley races recently. I rarely drink, so I'm often the driver, and my granddad's big Audi seats seven. We were on a back road when we hit a bump and the car flexed and took off. There were screams and my heart was pounding, but my uncle David, who was sitting in the front, was very calm and simply said: 'Well done, Bob. You held it together there'.



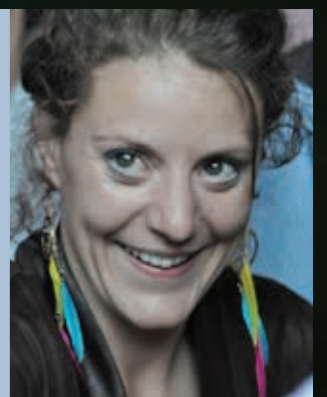
The last time I cried was over a man. I've had boyfriends since I was 16, but I'm single now. I'm fine with that.



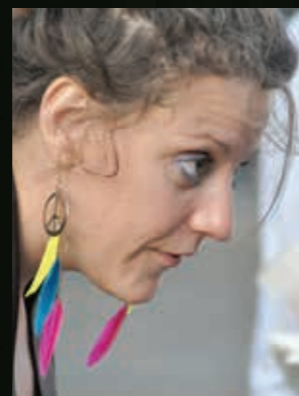
If I could take charge of my sport I would – allow more prize money; keep professionals out of hunter chasing; insist horses go hunting before going pointing or hunter chasing.



In a race there are rules to follow. Out hunting there is etiquette, but in both disciplines you need to be aware of the ground you are crossing, what is happening around you, particularly going into a jump or through a narrow gate. This complements race riding.



I'm useless when I'm broken [injured]. I'm very competitive with myself, and get cross easily when I can't do something or make a mistake. That can be in any area of life, be it with horses or at home.



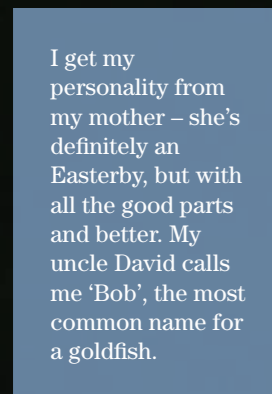
At school I was sporty, enjoyed all types of sports and was in the North of England Lacrosse team. Unfortunately I didn't have time to commit to it and couldn't go to many training sessions because they clashed with point-to-pointing.



I like all types of music, but my favourite is on Christmas Day when my sister plays the flute – it's just hysterical. I always wish I could play the piano and drums.



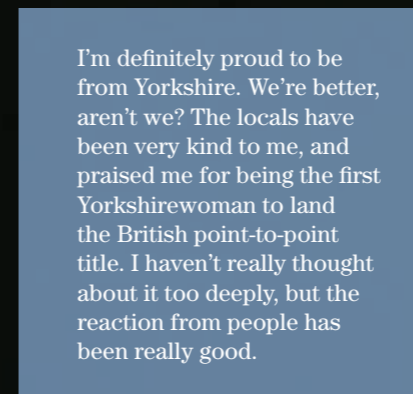
I can't drink alcohol – it makes me feel really poorly the next day and I don't like that. I want to get on and do things. At parties I can have an absolutely brilliant time without a drink. People say to Sam, 'What! Your sister's that mad without a drink' and she says 'Yes, that's why we don't give her any'.



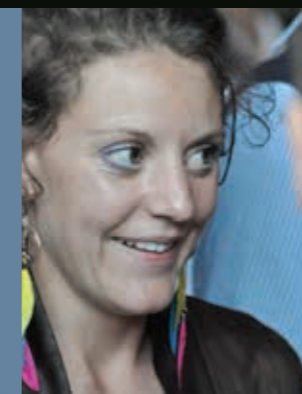
I get my personality from my mother – she's definitely an Easterby, but with all the good parts and better. My uncle David calls me 'Bob', the most common name for a goldfish.



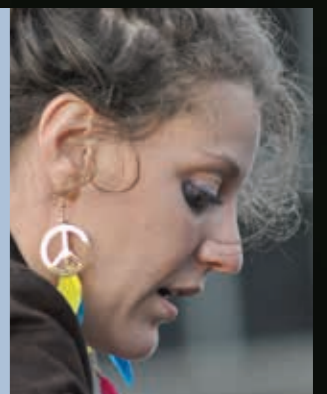
The last time I was confused was two minutes ago. I'm easily confused and was really bad at school, partly because I never did any work. Despite that the teachers all seemed to like me because I was so down to earth. I said to them, 'Look, if you want me to learn, teach me in class, but don't expect me to do any revision because I can't learn on my own'. I was polite to them, but very straight – I regarded them as my friends.



I'm definitely proud to be from Yorkshire. We're better, aren't we? The locals have been very kind to me, and praised me for being the first Yorkshirewoman to land the British point-to-point title. I haven't really thought about it too deeply, but the reaction from people has been really good.



My easy tips for first-time riders would be keep in the middle of the fences; don't think about riding a race until after you have jumped the final open ditch; don't over-use the whip.



Former rider Sutton joins the Board

Nick Sutton, the Point-to-Point Authority's newest board member, takes up his position in the New Year.

An owner and amateur rider who hung up his boots in the spring, Sutton (right), 49, headed a strong field of applicants to join the sport's most influential table as an independent member, replacing Heather Kemp who is about to complete her six-year term of office.

Married to Claire and father to their four children, Sutton, who lives near Cirencester, is an entrepreneur currently involved in IT software and vehicle leasing. Experience in business, allied to his recent race-riding experiences and on-going interests in racing, helped gain him the Board position.



He may never pull on a set of silks again, but his son Dominic has been lining up between the flags for two seasons and landed his first hunter chase earlier this year, while his younger brother Ben is keen to follow his sibling into pony racing. Sutton's sister is Tracey Bailey, trainer of the family's pointers and in the process

of obtaining a permit.

Sutton says with self-deprecation: "Since we no longer have to consider putting up a fat jockey, a permit will give us more options." However, he adds: "I retired from riding with some cracking memories, including being placed in the Aintree Fox Hunters' Chase and riding a winner at Cheltenham. Not many people have that on their CV."

The demands of family and business did not undermine his willingness to take on a new role. He says: "Pointing has given me a lot of fun, so if I can put something back it will be a privilege. I wanted to get involved while still in touch with riders and trainers.

"Pointing has its detractors,

but that is true of every sport, and given the depths of the recession in recent years point-to-pointing is still pretty healthy."

Although the sport now has to adhere to stricter standards, Sutton maintains there is still room for people from all backgrounds, not least among the riders. "The sport serves three types of riders," he says. "It is a fantastic schooling ground for youngsters who aim to become professional jockeys, albeit they pass through quickly. For committed riders who cannot make the weights under Rules it can provide many successful seasons of competitive action. Yet for riders who still treat it as a hobby there are opportunities, too."



Britain's men's champion Will Biddick

By his mates ... (and 'the boss')

Richard Barber

"He's very well balanced, and good at presenting young horses at a fence – and he doesn't seem to fall off them!"

"He schools here a couple of times a week, which is probably a key part of it. That means he gives us good feedback before we get to the races, and he knows the horses before they come under starters orders. I'm not a fan of putting novice riders on novice horses, especially if those youngsters are destined to join Paul Nicholls or Harry Fry."



"At one time he was a little bit weak in a finish, but he's got stronger. It's probably come with riding better horses and riding more finishes. I'd still outride him though!"

"He's very competitive – but on the quiet. He's determined and in everything he does he'll strive to reach the top, but he wouldn't want to show that. A man who rented us a barge at Wrenbury said we'd never get to Chester and back in four days. That triggered a spark in Will's head to prove him wrong. You know the rest [the barge sank]!"

Oliver Greenall

"He's a very natural rider. Riding as a conditional jockey against professionals made him improve and now he's back in the point-to-point field he looks a cut above the rest."



"He pretends to be laid back but he's very competitive and he wants to beat my record of winners in a season [56]. At lunchtimes during the season he's forever ringing people trying to get rides and organise his mounts so they don't clash."

"If I had to sum Will up in three words I'd say he's wild, rare and ignorant! He'd do anything for anybody and he's very hard-working – once he's up! I'd have to wake him up five times – he's a nightmare in the morning – not the kind of guy who would get up and make you breakfast."

Ed Glassonbury

"I'd call him a stereotypical Cornishman – I can say that having grown up in Cornwall myself – and if he walked onto the set of Doc Martin you wouldn't be surprised. Will and his dad are very much alike."



"Through point-to-pointing we became friends, and we've been on a few holidays since as a group of mates."

"When it comes to race riding, confidence is key – quite often Will is on the best horse in the race, and that carries over when he gets on an unfancied horse, and wins on that too."

Josh Guerriero

"He's a very quiet, natural rider. He just floats on a horse's back and doesn't interfere with them. Whenever he speaks to owners and trainers, he'll say it how it is. It comes out a bit Cornish and blunt sometimes but it's the best way – people appreciate his honesty."



"He always telling me I'll beat him in the championship, even though he knows full well he'll hack up! He seems to have convinced Richard Barber to run horses at tracks in the depths of Cornwall – he never used to have runners there! He'll go and ride a four-timer and I'll finish second in three of those races!"

"He's offered to school my horses this season when I can't get down to the Devon & Cornwall area [Josh is now based in Warwickshire] but he won't be nicking any rides!"

Sam Allwood

"He's a mischievous, straight-talking guy who's a lot of fun to be around. He'd be the first to admit he struggled when he started out, but now his balance is superb and he lets a horse find its own rhythm over an obstacle. He's the ultimate amateur rider."



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Breeders become sponsors in the sport

A new national sponsor has entered the sport with mares in mind and a bonus linked to a race at Cheltenham's evening hunters' chase meeting.

The Newmarket-based Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA) has joined in to back eight races restricted to mares and designed to be the next step after the Jockey Club-sponsored mares' maiden series. The TBA's races are open to mares of all abilities, but penalties should help towards creating an even playing field.

Any winner of a TBA race who makes the frame in Cheltenham's mares' hunters' chase at the evening fixture in May is in line for a bonus – details to be announced.

Louise Kemble, chief executive of the TBA, said: "We want to support mares at all levels, and are doing so under Rules and in point-to-points. This sponsorship is part of a strategy to give mare owners additional chances, to race mares in a bid to find the talented and durable ones, and to raise the attractiveness of fillies and mares at the sales."

Further details of national sponsorships – page 35



Louise Kemble
Mares in mind

A racing Plus for point-to-pointing

Racing Plus began covering British point-to-pointing for the first time last season, and is back to provide coverage every Saturday in the months ahead.



That will include reports, results, and entries for every meeting, plus colour photographs.

Excellent value at £1.40, the paper covers Flat and National Hunt racing in addition to point-to-pointing, and carries races in time order. Its pointing coverage will include a full review of 2012/13 on November 23, and a preview of the season ahead on November 30.

Racing Plus is available on your mobile and from your local newsagents.

Also providing weekly coverage of pointing in Britain is Horse & Hound magazine, which carries a results service plus news and views from around the country every Thursday. The weekly cover price is £2.90, but savings can be made by placing a subscription order, starting with a quarterly package.

Cut-price subs damage two sports, warns Felton

Owners and keepers of pointers who try to strike deals with hunts in order to gain reduced subscriptions are risking damage to the sport in the long term.

And the same applies to hunts who cut prices to attract point-to-point subscribers from their neighbours.

That warning comes from Mike Felton, who sits on the PPA Board as the Masters of Foxhounds' Association representative. The MFHA is able to monitor the sums paid by subscribers, and Felton says: "As so often in life, people think on an individual basis and don't look at the bigger picture."

"Cut-price subscriptions are a one-way route, cheapening the value of point-to-pointing to hunting. If a race meeting is badly affected by weather and loses money, but the hunt has benefited from healthy point-to-point subscriptions, it is far more likely that hunt will stage a meeting next season."

"It is a two-pronged issue, and we want to see a level-playing field for both subscribers and hunts. People need to regard their subscription as club membership – you would expect to pay the going rate for membership of a golf club or sailing marina, and the same applies to hunting."

Rolling 60-day regulation gets a tweak

The '60-day rule' introduced last season to enable more horses to come out of racing under rules and take part in point-to-points, has been tightened up.

A loophole enabled licensed trainers and permit holders to run a horse under rules and then, if they or close family members owned that horse, in a point-to-point a matter of days later. They will now have to wait 60 days also.

Regulation 34, which starts: No horse shall be eligible to be entered or run in a point-to-point in the current season which . . . now states, under sub-section (iii): For a period of 60 consecutive days prior to the day of closing of entries for the race for which the horse is being entered, has run in any race run under the Rules of any Recognised Racing Authority other than:-

- a) A steeplechase run between March 1, 2014 and May 30, 2014, which is confined to amateur riders, or
- b) A hunters' steeplechase.

However, if a horse runs in any race under Rules between November 1 and December 31, 2013, apart from a hunters' chase run in Ireland on or after October 1, it is ineligible to run in a hunters' chase in the coming season.



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Hill's hope can be Harbour master

Which horses could make a mark in hunters' chases this season – **Andrew Norman** surveys the scene



Ireland's **Salsify** will attempt to break new ground by becoming the first horse to win the CGA Foxhunter Chase for a third time at the Cheltenham Festival in March.

Despite being a fortunate winner of this year's renewal, rider Colman Sweeney is brimming with confidence ahead of the new campaign. He says: "We left him out a

little longer than usual as he had a tough season. He'll start back in a point before Christmas and we'll take it from there.

"**Harbour Court** has looked impressive but he'll be stepping up in class and I'm of the opinion that we have the best hunter chaser in Salsify."

The son of Beneficial was firmly put in his place by **Mossey Joe**, who is unbeaten when completing in this sphere, in Stratford's W+S Recycling Cup in June, but a cloud remains over the ten-year-old's participation in hunter chases this season with an ownership dispute on-going.

The most promising hunter this side of the Irish Sea is undoubtedly **Harbour Court**, who impressed at the top of the novice tree last season. Trainer Alan Hill, who saddled Bon Accord to win the CRM intermediate final before finishing second in the Foxhunter the following season, is hoping his charge can go one better. Hill says: "He's all class and Cheltenham seemed to suit him so the Foxhunter remains the big dream. I'm of the impression he's a horse who goes best fresh so it's likely he'll



Harbour Court, seen winning the Connolly's Red Mills Intermediate Series final at Cheltenham under James Tudor © Brian Armstrong



Lorikarad (right, Liam Payter), seen beating CGA Foxhunter Chase runner-up Divine Intavention, is back this season

have just the one run in January, possibly in a Point-to-Point."

Tartan Snow, who caused a huge upset in Aintree's Fox Hunters' Chase, will return to defend his crown in 2014. Trainer Stuart Coltherd reports the gelding to have lost none of his enthusiasm, despite rising 14. He says: "He didn't start racing until he was seven and he hasn't told us he's had enough yet! Hello Bud won the Becher Chase at his age so there's nothing to say he can't win it again."

A photo was needed to split Tartan Snow and runner-up **Cool Friend**, who was caught in the shadow of the post. The latter's owner/trainer, Oliver Greenall, says: "She will have one or two runs over 2m4f in February/March then go back to Aintree."

Lorikarad, a dual hunter chase winner in 2012, will make his comeback at Barbury in December. Owner/trainer Charlotte Jones, says: "He had a small tendon injury so we decided to give him a season off. We'll take small steps but Cheltenham is the obvious aim."

Stephen Bevan enjoyed a successful campaign in 2013 despite a mid-season yard virus and may have the ammunition to challenge for the trainers' title in hunter chases this term. Dour stayer **Bobs Law** did little wrong in his three starts, and Bevan says: "He was impressive at Ffos Las but a little injury flared up so he didn't re-appear. He's fine now and the owners have spoken about Cheltenham, but that's a long way off."

It is yet to be decided if the fragile **Universal Soldier** will remain in this sphere, but if Bevan can persuade his owners he is confident the gelding can take high rank, while **Overlut** will, "have a couple of Points before trying to win at Stratford for the fourth time".

After a spell on the all-weather, pointing has being the making of the Bevan-trained mare **Watch The Birdie**, who was unbeaten between the flags last season. Her trainer says: "She could go the top. She'll lose her five-year-old allowance but she shouldn't have a problem dealing with that. The owners enjoy Stratford so we may aim her at the AGA Ladies' Final."

Another with a perfect record last term was the Ed Walker-trained **Thinkaboutthat**. Walker says: "He's an exciting prospect who kept on surprising us and if he continues his progression we'll look at a hunter chase," while of **Punter Friendly** he adds: "A nice horse that we were fairly easy on last season, he'll start in an Intermediate with a view to qualifying for one of the Finals." Walker has the four-

miler at Cheltenham in mind for **Hameldown Tor**, a horse that realised his potential alongside **Ned The Post** at Stratford.

Josh Guerreiro is looking forward to riding the Jill Dennis-trained **Indiana Bay**. Guerreiro says: "He wasn't himself when second in the CRM Intermediate Final. The form was franked at Stratford so I'd like to think he can cut it in hunter chases. Claire [Hitch] has a nice horse in **Batu Ferringhi** too. Hopefully they'll both train on."

Glint Of Steel eased through the grades in the South East last season, and trainer/rider Philip Hall says: "We don't really know how good he is. He will still take some filling out and I can't wait to have another crack with him next season."

Exciting unbeaten six-year-old **Theatre Queen**, the apple of trainer/rider Mark Wall's eye, is being readied for the intermediate race at Barbury in December. Wall says: "The realistic aim is the Cheltenham Hunter Chase Evening, where hopefully we'll have the choice of the Champion Mares', Colin Nash or the Connolly's **Red Mills** Intermediate Final."



Dingley maiden winner Squirrel Esquire (James Martin) is an exciting prospect

Perfectly Willing, twice successful between the flags last term, is now in the care of Tim Sage, who uses Wall's services. "He could be an interesting prospect for novice hunter chasing," said Wall, who is enthusiastic about the future of Whitfield maiden scorer **Boston Article**, stationed with Fran Moller, trainer of CGA Foxhunter runner-up **Divine Intavention**.

Sam Allwood welcomes **Mister Tiger**, a progressive three-time winner in his inaugural campaign, back into training after missing last season with a minor injury. The trainer/rider says: "I'm looking forward to running him in an Intermediate. I'd like to qualify him for one of the Finals and see how he progresses."

Progressive young rider James Martin is hopeful impressive Dingley maiden victor **Squirrel Esquire** can advance this season. Owned, trained and bred by the Plunkett family, the penny has dropped early in his career. "He could be a bit special. He gave me a super feel at Dingley and is definitely a horse for the future," said the rider.

Richard Russell assesses hunters' chase fixtures – pages 42-43

Road-test RIDER

We asked leading point-to-point rider Mark Wall to test kit and clothing from the Treehouse Sporting Colours range. He found it hard to fault, but you would expect that from one of Britain's leading stockists

1. Charles Owen APM helmet - rrp £109.95
Mark's mark - 9/10

"These are great helmets - I've worn them in the past, but the latest model has been slightly modified for the better. In past there was almost too much padding, but now adapted to be more comfortable. Extra protection around the ear and side of the cheek doesn't reduce hearing. Helmets can take time to 'break in', but this comfortable from first use." *Kitemarked BSEN1384 and PAS015:1998.*

2/3. Jomiluti waterproof set rrp £200.00. Mark's mark - Jkt 9/10 Trs 9/10 (might make 9.5 over time)

"I was really impressed with this two-piece. I had never come across a pair of waterproof trousers that didn't ride up when in the saddle, but the press stud fastening kept these in place. All openings - cuffs, collar etc - well designed to keep elements out, and the jacket's low-cut back makes a good over-lap with trousers. I tested the suit in some pretty wet and cold weather, and it is definitely waterproof and comfortable.

It's not heavily quilted so extra layers needed in winter, but zips and studs good quality. I like the opening at the front of the trousers, which makes for easy access when call of nature comes."

Save money and buy the jacket and trousers together as a set. Available in Black or Blue.



4. Pro-Cush Whip (microchipped) - rrp £39.95. Mark's mark - 8/10

"In the past the button on top, carrying the kite mark, tended to fall off and you had to buy another whip to prove its standard. The micro-chipped version seems more durable. Nice and balanced and if used properly do not mark horses."

The 'Pro-cush' micro-chipped model now mandatory for all licensed jump jockeys in UK. Names can be embroidered onto whip.

5. Old Mill exercise saddle - rrp £375 (Old Mill's race saddle from £390 depending on weight). Mark's mark - 7.5/10 (but could rise with time)

"I didn't know what to make of this half-tree saddle, because it had quite a flat pommel and felt more like a racing saddle than an exercise saddle - can't be used for racing because stirrup bar opens. Well-padded and has a thick piece of leather along the bottom which should stand up to rubbing by the boot. It would take me a while to get used to it, but in time it should soften, change shape and give greater sense of sitting into the horse."

6. Shepherds Non-Slip Pad - rrp £17.50. Mark's mark - 9.5/10

"A standard item to prevent saddle slipping back at exercise or in races. Very good value and hardwearing. Seam around edge to prevent ripping, and extra padding at the bottom and fur to protect withers. Excellent."



7. Racesafe Jockey Vest - rrp from £137 to £148. Sizes - Flat, NH & PtP (most ptp riders use NH). Mark's mark - 9/10

"I've used this model in the past, but latest has been modified around the zip, with extra padding behind, and it was shaped better to fit comfortably. You cannot have anything too bulky and these do their job. I dread to think of injuries jockeys suffered before this sort of vest was invented."

Designed for jockeys worldwide, tested to SATRA and European Standard EN13158:2000 Level 1.



8. Paul Carberry Waterproof Set - rrp £175.00. Sizes XS-XXL Mark's mark - Jkt 6/10, Trs 8.5/10

"I'm sorry, but for me the jacket was just another jacket. It fitted comfortably, but I didn't get a chance to test it in serious weather to see how it would have fared. Very impressed with the breeches, and reckon they would be brilliant in winter. They are lined, but lightweight and very comfortable, and easy to pull on over boots. Would be great for women riders who suffer with chilblains in winter."

Weatherproof, showerproof & breathable jacket and breeches. Jacket has a drop tail and a fleece inner. The breeches are patched on the seat and knees to provide extra grip. Colour: Dark blue

9. Old Mill Exercise Boots - rrp £119.50. Mark's mark - 8/10

"I was gobsmacked they were so good for the price. Made from lovely leather and very comfortable, yet robust enough to prevent chafing by stirrup leathers. The rubber sole meant foot did not slip in the stirrup. I have found zips tend to break, so usually buy pull-on boots, but if these were to last for a good few seasons I would mark them higher."

Strong YKK zip fastener. Available in black or brown leather, & narrow/medium or medium/wide leg width.

10. MacWet Gloves – Climatec - rrp \$29.50, MacWet Gloves - Micromesh - rrp \$27.50, Sizes 6.5 – 11. Common sizes - women 7.75, men 8.5. Mark's Mark (both types) 8.5/10

"I only use this brand, and have long found the 'Climatec' glove perfect for winter, the 'Micromesh' for warmer weather. Climatec is not bulky on the reins, despite the lining, while Micromesh great for holding a sweaty horse. From experience they do not last forever – depending how you use them - but you cannot have 'feel' and toughness. There has to be a compromise and I'm happy with what they've achieved."

Skin tight fit allows for tack to be adjusted without the need to remove gloves.



11. Heated gilet/waistcoat - rrp \$109.00. Mark's mark - 8.5/10.

"My father and I gave this a thorough test at Tattersalls' October Sales where we were showing yearlings and standing around in cold weather. Works as it claims and keeps you warm. Battery didn't feel clumpy, its life was fair, and easy to remove for recharging or washing the gilet. Wear on any outdoor occasion. Other designs, such as a turn-up collar, would broaden its appeal."

Has a fully rechargeable, removable battery pack that distributes heat evenly to four areas in the front, chest and lower back, lasting for 2.5 to 4 hours depending on temperature selected. Heating elements are durable, flexible and high strength.



12. Ornella Windproof/Showerproof Breeches - rrp \$72.50. Sizes XS (24" waist) to XL (32" waist). Mark's mark - 7/10 (hard to rate, not ridden in races).

"I've never owned a pair of 'waterproof' race breeches, but I would wear these. Waterproof trousers used to go over race breeches, but did not give. These didn't feel constricted. I didn't get a chance to test them in the rain, but judging by the material and knowing the maker I am sure they would be waterproof."

Breathable, waterproof and windproof. Slightly heavier weight than the standard race breeches by Ornella.



13. Wireless heated insoles - rrp \$99.95. Mark's mark - 8/10.

"I bought these as a birthday present for my father, so they had to work! He wore them at the sales and found them very toasty. Ideal for standing around on a day's hunting, shooting or fishing, or of course, as a racegoer."

Remote control function for ease of operation, no external batteries/wires. Four sizes can be trimmed to fit. Heating time up to six hours with three heat settings selected via remote fob. See more at: <http://www.blazewear.com/x-range/x5-heat-soles.html#sthash.UpMbdPuX.dpuf>.

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	\$295.00 and over	FOC

Free Planner with RSS

Riders who gain backing through the Riders' Sponsorship Scheme (RSS) will receive a free copy of the Planner, the soft-back book which contains a wealth of information including conditions of every race. It is published by the Point-to-Point Racing Company and normally costs £30 plus p&p.

The RSS is now into its fourth season, and enables riders to receive between £350 and £950 in sponsorship which can be used to buy racing kit and pay for some medical expenses. The money must be banked with the PPA office, the kit sourced from designated suppliers, and riders must wear sponsored branding on breeches and/or polo shirts.

Costs such as travelling expenses, riding fines, and for buying the type of waterproof apparel used purely for exercising horses cannot be paid for through the RSS.

A separate scheme for sponsoring horses is also ongoing – the Horse Sponsorship Scheme (HSS) – and enables individual horses to be sponsored for sums between £300 and £950 – although anyone sponsoring ten horses can do so for £100 per horse.

Sponsors' names are placed in racecards and their company logos or branding (of a limited size) can be placed on paddock sheets and grooms' jackets. Through HSS any owner who intends running their pointer in hunter chases can register for VAT relief on some of their training expenses.

For further details see the Planner, log on to www.pointtopoint.co.uk or call the PPA on 01285 841920. For VAT questions call the Weatherbys VAT Sponsorship Desk on 01933 440077.

Prize money lift

Prize money has been pulled up from the bottom to increase the minimum amount payable.

In 2012/13 open races (excluding Classic or area features) had to offer between £275 and £550, but the lower figure has been raised to £325. Other races that could offer £200 to £350, must now achieve £250 minimum.

Tubes on way out

Tubed horses will no longer be allowed to run in point-to-points, unless the surgery was carried out before October 1, 2013.

A veterinary certificate to that effect will have to be produced as evidence.

Tweet & greet

Keep up to date with news about the sport of point-to-pointing via Twitter and Facebook.

The PPA @Point2PointAuth and the Point-to-Point Racing Company @pointtopoint both provide useful updates, and they also have a place on Facebook pages.



At home with Palypso De Creek

Charlotte Russell and photographer Louise Pollard travelled to **Mike and Jill Dawson's** Lincolnshire home, to meet Britain's **reigning point-to-point champion**

His owner/trainer affectionately calls Palypso De Creek "the rudest horse I have ever come across", but then again most of us would forgive the British champion.

The ten-year-old, winner of the Connolly's Red Mills-sponsored Leading Point-to-Point Horse title last season when he recorded eight victories - two more than Dorset-based Master Medic and Northumberland's Tommysteel - is back in work and looks fantastic at Jill and Mike Dawson's farm on the Lincolnshire coast. They hope to start the champ's next season off at the Yorkshire Area Point-to-Point Club Meeting at Sheriff Hutton in January.

'He likes his routine, even if it means being ridden for only ten minutes'

Mike - who occasionally rides out, but more importantly pays the bills - and Jill have four horses in training for this season, but 'Paxo', as he is affectionately known, is king of the yard. "He does everything we want but we do it his way" says Jill. "He doesn't particularly like flat work so I exercise him in a Market Harborough [form of martingale] to help build his top line. When we first got him he refused to eat the nuts we had and will only eat Red Mills," which is appropriate given he won that company's championship.



He does everything we want, but we do it his way

Jill modestly says she was lucky to find Palypso De Creek, who she acquired towards the end of the 2011/12 season. At the point he was in the care of rider Claire Hart, who got him from licensed trainer Charlie Longsdon's Gloucestershire yard on the understanding that she could point him for a season before he went to the sales. Jill intervened and bought him on the condition that Claire would keep the ride unless Jill was able to make a return to the saddle. Due to on-going cancer treatment that wasn't possible and Claire rode Paxo to victory in no less than eight ladies open races, finishing second once and gaining a win and second in two hunters' chase starts.

Jill credits Claire with much of the hard work, but gives a special mention to back man Roy Midwood. When she first worked with the horse, Jill felt he was weak behind, but Midwood made a difference. In addition to the winning sequence, Paxo's behaviour when turned out to grass is proof that he is physically a happy horse. "He destroys himself in a field,"

says Jill. "If you turn him out with another horse they gallop relentlessly, but he seems to get on well with Tilly the pony and she is a calming influence on him. He jumps anything out hunting, but we have a lot of plough around us so we don't overdo it once we've qualified. He's a racehorse."

Well known for her association with multiple-winning pointers Sweet Diana, Yorkshire Mariner and, more recently, Upham Lord, Jill has gained a reputation for rejuvenating horses from the track and places emphasis on having them fresh and well to ensure they are happy. Her high standards are shared with head girl Kerry Wakefield who takes great pride in producing the horses immaculately at the races. The wash-down box has the luxury of hot water, as well as a heat lamp, although Jill says Palypso de Creek continually tries to roll while being washed. He is very ticklish and hates being groomed, so they have to come to an arrangement whereby he tolerates being sponged down, but only around his saddle and girth area.

Horses come first on this yard, and Jill says she is never afraid to take one home from the races without running if the conditions on the course are not right. She doesn't have a walker and believes that although they can be useful for injured horses, they are not part of a training regime. The farm is mainly arable and with little grass, but the beach is only three miles away, and the horses do all their canter work on the sands.

The compacted shoreline can be an unforgiving surface, but the Dawsons know their area well and experience few problems. They set poles a mile apart on the sand and the string trots down, partly to warm up and partly to check the surface before cantering back, and can do this two to three times on each visit. Fast work is done on gallops owned by licensed Flat trainer James Given, or at Pelham's Pillar on the Earl of Yarborough's estate. This mix of work keeps the horses interested, and Jill says of the amount she gives each horse, "I go with my gut feeling on the day".

Her mantra has been to learn at least one thing from every person she meets who is involved with horses, and her time

If you turn him out with another horse they gallop relentlessly, but he gets on well with Tilly the pony

riding out with Jim Lee, former head lad to the legendary Paddy Sleator in Ireland, taught her that when horses are fit they don't need a great deal of exercise between races. Despite that, Paxo is only given a day or two off after a run, otherwise he won't eat his food. Jill says: "He likes his routine, even if it means being ridden for only ten minutes." Her skill is balancing training with each horse's individual characteristics.

The Dawsons have won a number of titles, although they claim they never set targets. Jill's philosophy is to run horses when they are well, and, feeling her star had "gone quiet" after a long season, opted not to declare him for the AGA ladies' final at Stratford in June.

That race could come on Palypso De Creek's radar this season, and AGA's new National Open Horse Championship is very appealing. Jill says: "My mother-in-law has had her AGA for over 60 years and I'm sure she would appreciate a new one."

With two open horses, Palypso de Creek and Minella Class, in her yard, as well as rising prospect Blarney Highwayman, a new AGA could well be winging its way to Lincolnshire.





Turn on, log in and learn - fast.

Tessa Jenkins looks at how point-to-pointing is getting up to speed with technology via websites and social media

Point-to-pointing followers may include a large number of people who shy away from fully utilising computers and smart phones to source information, yet the sport has to embrace the virtues of modern technology.

Increasingly it is doing so, as individual meetings, regions and the sport's national body utilise the airwaves to convey information. The explosion in sales of hardware – be it mobile phones, laptop computers or tablets (often misguidedly known as iPads in the way vacuum cleaners are generically called Hoovers) – makes it vital that opportunities to reach such tools are explored.

Some homes suffer from poor broadband reception and 'slow'

connections to the worldwide web, but the vast majority of people use a mobile phone, and if point-to-pointing can send relevant information via that medium it would be misguided in rejecting the notion. And for those who simply cannot handle the medium, all is not lost – Racing Plus, published on a Saturday and available via newspaper retailers nationwide, provides information in printed form.

The printed format cannot compete with modern technology for speed, and many consider it dated, but it suits some, and the sport is keen not to lose touch with people who prefer news via the time-honoured route.



Trainer Sally Duckett, who saddled That's Rhythm to win last season's AGA final at Stratford, is rarely far from her lap-top, tablet and smart phone

From an early pioneer to a tweeted message

It is 15 years since Dom Bradshaw and www.jumpingforfun.co.uk gave point-to-pointing its foothold on the World Wide Web. In the intervening years whilst Jumpingforfun, with its open and sometimes controversial discussion forum, has remained a virtual hangout for point-to-point fans, there has also been growth in official sites at national and grass roots levels.

Official flag bearer is the national site, www.pointtopoint.co.uk, which last season enhanced its results service to provide placings and comments in running for all runners. New for the coming season will be the inclusion of Pointerform ratings alongside entries.

The site offers a range of free-to-access content including news, owner/trainer/rider documentation, regulatory information and, from Friday each week, access to entries and results. Subscribers to the £40 per season Membership Package benefit from early access to entries and results, along with use of the form database. The Plus Package, costing £80 per season, adds access to the ViewPoint video service to the deal.

Where the national site represents a valuable resource for participants and the dedicated racegoer, a new offering from the Point-to-Point Authority aims to appeal to a different audience. Currently in "soft launch" www.gopointing.co.uk is described by executive Lucy Tucker as a marketing tool intended to complement the national site.

"It's a resource for newcomers and racegoers, and to promote point-to-pointing as a good day out. We're all aware that pointing during December to February is largely for purists, but once into March and meetings start putting on extra events, terrier racing, ferret racing, running a country fair" says Tucker.

"The site is also designed to link everything up, we've been working hard to find all the Twitter Accounts and Facebook Pages that hunts, point-to-points and courses have put in place because we want to list these and steer people to meetings in their area. Likewise, if someone wants to get involved as a rider it will direct them to the national website where they can download all relevant information."

With ten of the sport's 14 areas and more than 40 fixtures having dedicated websites as well as an ever increasing number of Facebook Pages and Twitter Accounts, developing a comprehensive picture of what's available and facilitating easy access could prove an important step towards building an effective national communication and promotional strategy for the sport.

With the national sites focussed primarily on action between the flags, hunter chase fans would do well to bookmark www.hunterchases.com, created by commentator Gareth Topham and South Midlands PRO Andrew Norman. It provides readable and informative pre- and post-race analysis. Hunter chase entries and results can be found at www.racingpost.co.uk.

Looking further afield, those with an interest in Irish pointing coverage will find what they need at www.p2p.ie. Independent of the sport's governing body, the Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Committee, the site is owned and commercially funded by Richard Pugh's company Irish Point to Point Services Ltd. Free to all are entries and results including comments in running, news, a wide range of rider, handler and breeding stats and race results back to 2000. A €100 subscription buys detailed race analysis, additional analytics and video coverage of every race between the flags in Ireland.

Where the growth of websites has created an abundance of 'go to' information, the explosion in social media such as Facebook and Twitter has created new opportunities to push messages to an audience.

As a low-cost means of sharing time-sensitive information, Twitter is proving to be a potent communication tool.

Tucker says: "Last season Twitter (@PointtoPointAuth) was brilliant, especially in light of the bad winter weather and cancellations we had. It enabled us to share time-sensitive information with a wide audience very quickly, and if the information originates from the PPA then recipients can be sure it is official and correct .

Jeanette Dawson, secretary of the Point-to-Point Owners' and Riders' Association, says: "As a means of instant communication for factual information, Twitter (@THEPPORA) is amazing. When we tweeted our going for the PPORA meeting, and Horse & Hound retweeted it, that hugely upped the reach of the information.

"The big dilemma is knowing how many owners don't use computers? You can't rely solely on websites and social media, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it."

Tucker concurs, saying: "Love it or loath it, tweeting and social media is the way forward."

For a comprehensive directory of pointing-related websites, Facebook Pages and Twitter Accounts go to www.gopointing.co.uk

"You can't rely solely on websites and social media, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it"

Continued over





You have a point-to-point product, so how do you use social media to market it

1 Know who you want to communicate with and why:

Understanding this is the basis for choosing appropriate communication channels and creating appropriate content and functionality

2 Be realistic about resources and capabilities:

Building and maintaining a website and using social media requires time, technical skills and resources, but there are ways to make it cheaper and easier.

Devon and Cornwall, the latest area to launch a website (www.p2phorseraces-dc.com), developed their site using wordpress.com a free web publishing and hosting service.

Site creator Stephen Wensley (pictured above) says: "I was looking for a way to create a site that was easily implemented and maintained, could be updated by people with limited website maintenance experience, offered significant extensibility and was supported by most existing internet services. I decided on Wordpress.com blogging platform as it offered all of those features, as well as many templates to make the implementation easier. Overall, it took me a few hours to familiarize myself with the Oxygen [magazine format] template. I would suggest it takes around 20 hours to set up and about one hour per fixture to maintain the website."

3 Understand the strengths and limitations of the different communication channels:

Consider which works best for you, your objectives and your audience.

Don't ignore traditional communication methods such as print media and phone based services such as Talking Point. Social media is expanding rapidly, but not yet universally used

4 Build your audience:

Think of ways to increase you Facebook and Twitter followers and to encourage visitors to your website



"I would suggest it takes around 20 hours to set up and about one hour per fixture to maintain the website"

Don't just add a Twitter or Facebook icon to your web page, include a clear call to action such as, 'Follow us on Twitter for going updates and important announcements ahead of our meeting on XXX'

Send a tweet to draw attention to new information on your website.

Let the PPA know details of your website, Facebook Page and Twitter Account so they can add them to the directory on www.gopointing.co.uk and ask other related sites to include a link to you.

Think of ways to encourage retweeting. West Wales Area Secretary Beverley Thomas has found that using Twitter to acknowledge sponsors often brings an additional benefit when they retweet the message. Remember though, that it's not all about numbers and you need to attract the right people too.

5 Make your website a user-friendly experience

Use a site name that makes it easy to find and remember. Make content relevant, accurate and current.

Avoid overcrowding pages and organize information into logical groups and make it easy to find through a clear menu structure and links that work.

Don't overuse colours, font styles and sizes. Take care with special effects such as movement, which can be distracting, and text superimposed on images, which can be hard to read

6 Avoid sending virtual junk mail:

Twitter and Facebook allow you to push information to your audience in a timely way, but keep it targeted or you increase the chance of being ignored. Tweeting "8am precautionary inspection" is useful, revealing what's in the Clerk of the Course's sandwiches is not

7 Communication is a two-way street:

Provide contact details and monitor social media accounts for comments and questions.

Didn't they do well...



Stan Turner, trained Bleuivito, winner of the D&H novice riders' final at Tabley



Phil & Mel Rowley, trained a five-timer at Bangor and three hunters' chase winners at Ludlow



Devon's Bryony Frost, Britain's champion novice woman rider



Tom Greenall, joint British record-holder (56 wins in a season) hung up his boots



Alan Hill trained Connolly's Red Mills Intermediate Series final winner Harbour Court



Tom Lacey, brilliant trainer of a young horse, and selling them for good money, too



Jonathan Tudor, who trained the first winner at Britain's newest course, Pyle in Wales



Martin McIntyre, men's novice champion and Harley Racing series winner



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To hunt, or not to hunt - that is the question



Horses are supposed to hunt a minimum of four times to qualify for point-to-pointing, but is that an anachronism from a time when hunters went racing? Catherine Austen finds varied views

Taking point-to-pointers hunting is a much-discussed topic.

Horses are supposed to hunt at least four times to gain a hunters' certificate that enables them to run in races, but as the sport becomes more professional and the horses more valuable, is it really necessary? Do the risk of injuries outweigh apparent advantages?

Berkshire-based Sally Duckett, Britain's champion hunter chase trainer, believes so, and says: "I was brought up a 'hunting girl' and love hunting and everything that it stands for, but I am not sure that qualifying point-to-pointers as a strict requirement really has a place anymore."

"Point-to-point horses are expensive to buy and keep and if you or an owner has spent a lot of money acquiring a horse for racing, the last thing you need is the threat of injury through hunting - they are racehorses, not hunters."

Yet Philippa Shirley-Beavan thinks it is still an essential part of their education. She trains in the Scottish borders, and hunts most of her pointers regularly, saying: "I try to take them as much as possible - if they behave. I think it does them good."

She has even field mastered for the Jed Forest Hunt from her pointers, and adds: "It can be the making of them. For the first three or four times we take them quietly at the back - it's ideal to get them out autumn hunting when there's lots of standing around - and after that, we let them really enjoy themselves."

Sally qualifies most of her pointers with the Berks and Bucks Draghounds, saying that following hounds over a planned course is safer. She



adds: "When I started riding pointers, we used hunting as part of a fittening programme, but I now have access to good gallops. I know we are lucky and some people still use hunting to help get one ready for galloping - that is up to them and their system of training."

These opposing views are reflected throughout the point-to-pointing world, and there are those who change their mind. Owner Sarah Dawson (pictured left), who has four pointers in training with Tor Collins, used to be firmly of the view that pointers should be hunted little and without breaking sweat if possible.

Sarah says: "I started pointing myself in 1990 when I was 18. My first experience of hunting a pointer was when I took my schoolmaster, got carted and the master shouted at me. It was only when I met Tor that my attitude changed. She'd say to me, 'Oh, we'll be out for three or four hours', and I'd say, 'What!' The moment hounds move off, Tor is at the front of the field."

But Sarah is now a convert, and says: "I tend to buy ex-chasers who have gone sour with the view that being in a smaller yard, hunting and hacking, will sweeten them up. And it definitely works."

"It has transformed older horses, and youngsters learn to get a 'fifth leg', learn to cope with different terrain and being bumped and squashed before a fence and how to gallop with lots of other horses."

She even hunts them herself - and loves it, saying: "I used to wrap them up in boots and avoid jumping as much as possible. Now, I don't boot them at all. If an injury is going to happen, it will happen. I want them to hunt as much as they can."



Status quo is right for now



Mike Felton, who represents the Master of Foxhounds' Association (MFHA) on the Point-to-Point Authority Board, confirms the requirement for pointers to hunt four times.

Doing so makes them eligible for a hunters' certificate, although Felton accepts "a practical approach" is

being taken by owners of pointers and secretaries or masters of hunts. If a pointer proves too highly strung to hunt safely, few masters would refuse to grant its owner a hunters' certificate if they had paid a point-to-point subscription.

Felton (left) says: "Some believe hunting four times should be compulsory, others take a more pragmatic view and feel the current system works. Officially, dispensation can only be granted if hunting is cancelled through extreme weather or an issue such as foot and mouth."

However, Felton, three times Britain's men's champion rider, warns: "An enormous number of people with an interest in hunting give their time voluntarily to stage point-to-points."

"They do so primarily to help raise funds for the hunts, but if point-to-point people buy into the whole hunting set up - including taking their pointers hunting - it is more likely those volunteers will keep giving their time."



Off to the races

Top-flight riders Hannah Watson and Josh Guerriero swap crash hats and goggles for outfits that would look great at any point-to-point

First-time visitors to a point-to-point are often unsure about what to wear, and while the easy answer is that 'anything goes', it is usually best to wear clothing that can cope with a day in the countryside and a variety of weather.

No matter how settled conditions are at home it can feel several degrees chillier in the wide-open spaces of a point-to-point racecourse, so pack an extra layer of clothing and throw some wellies in, even if there is no sign of rain.

two of Britain's leading riders – Josh Guerriero and Hannah Watson – handed them over to Elm, and produced our own fashion shoot in Burford's High Street.

Hannah and Josh would be the first to say their usual mode of clothing involves jodphurs, body armour and crash hats, and they showed slight initial caution to the cutting-edge, countryside look that typifies Elm's range. But after a quick schooling session they grabbed the bit and strutted out like two racegoers off to collect from the bookies.

Special thanks to Ian Tonks, our photographer for the occasion, and also to Elm of Burford – with an easy-to-use website and busy mail order department they can supply clothing to any location, so check out their range at www.elmofburford.com.

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Based on the borders of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, Elm of Burford Ltd, the country clothing specialists, have a cracking collection of outfits made for any occasion, not least a day at the races. So we hijacked



Insets (left to right). **Josh**; Akubra Coolabah Hat (Bran & Santone Fawn) sizes 54-61 £149.00, Barbour Lutz Coat (Olive) sizes M-2XL £229.95, Barbour Tattersall Shirt (Olive, Olive/Navy, Olive/S-2XL) \$59.95. **Hannah**; Akubra Angler (Regency Fawn/Loden) sizes 54-61 £142.00, Schoffel Whitwell Wax Jacket (Brown) sizes 8-20 £349.95, RM Williams Lake Torrens Shirt (Pink/Blue or white) sizes 8-18 £64.95, Elm of Burford Leather Rucksack (Tan/Black) \$95.00, RM Williams TJ437 Legend Jeans size 8-18 £109.95. **Josh**; Schoffel Egleton Jacket, sizes S-2XL, Nobel Wilde Scarf (Pumice) \$52.95, Schoffel Herringbone Tie with pheasant motif (purple) \$59.95, Schoffel Cambridge shirt (Indigo) sizes 15-18.5 collar - \$69.95, RM Williams TJ787 Luxury Moleskins (Camel, Moss, Steel, Doeskin). **Hannah**; Schoffel 'Baker Boy' Hat (Bennett Tweed/Moss Heather) \$49.95, Schoffel Lyndon Fleece (Ruby/Sage/Navy/Duck Egg/Aubergine/Raspberry) £119.95, RM Williams Lake Torrens Shirt (Pink/Blue or white) sizes 8-18 £64.95. **Josh**; Schoffel Oakham Fleece (Navy/Lincoln Green/Gun Metal/Dark Olive), Schoffel Herringbone Tie with pheasant motif (purple) \$59.95, Schoffel Cambridge shirt (Indigo) sizes 15-18.5 collar - \$69.95.



Josh wears; Akubra Cattleman Hat, sizes 54 – 61 £125.00, Schoffel Parmigan Extreme, sizes 38-54 \$429.95, Schoffel Oakham (Lincoln Green/Navy/Gun Metal/Dark Olive) sizes 38-54 £119.95, Schoffel Herringbone Tie with pheasant motif (purple) \$59.95, Schoffel Cambridge shirt (Indigo) sizes 15-18.5 collar \$69.95, RM Williams TJ092 Bootleg stretch denim jeans, 32R/L – 44R/L £109.95, RM Williams Comfort Craftsman boots (chestnut) sizes 4-13 £289.95. **Hannah wears**; Furfelt 'Mason' Trilby sizes 54-57 (various colours) \$75.00, Schoffel 3in1 Uppingham II (Midnight or Olive) sizes 8-20 \$319.95, Noble Wild Market Day Zip Cardigan (Regatta) size 8-18 £189.95, RM Williams Lake Torrens Shirt (Pink/Blue or white) sizes 8-18 £64.95, RM Williams TJ437 Legend Jeans size 8-18 £109.95, RM Williams Kimberley Boots (suede or yearling leather) sizes 4-8 £289.95.

Rider numbers a concern

The PPORA's chairman makes some key points at AGM

Understanding reasons for a decline in rider numbers was among issues touched upon by chairman Richard Fuller at the Association's Annual General Meeting held at Stratford in June.

He said a 10% reduction in those eligible to ride in point-to-points and hunter chases (against a 9% decline under Rules) and a drop in eligible horses (by 11% to 3,754) were concerns. However, he said the on-going effects of a lengthy recession continued to be felt.

Experience gained in pony racing helped when riders graduated into pointing, but keeping riders in the sport once they lost their novice status was an issue. Fewer riders could lead to an increase in riders' insurance premiums.

The question of expenses for riders had been debated at committee and board level, but there was little or no support for any change to the current voluntary system from either owners or riders.

Chandler joins Club fixture

In reflecting on a profitable, one-day, Owners' & Riders' Club meeting at Barbury Castle, he expressed gratitude to that fixture's chairman, Nick Bush, and his team. Nick has stood down to be replaced by Robert Killen, while John and Doreen

Harte step aside as treasurer and secretary respectively. John will be replaced by Ian Prichard, but Doreen stays on for one year to assist new secretary Lesley Chandler.

PPORA Club races, of which 90 were scheduled, had attracted average fields of nearly nine per race.

On communication, he said regular e-newsletters had been sent out from the PPORA's Kent office, while meeting dates and agendas were placed on the Association's website and at meetings on new area noticeboards. Twitter (check out @theppora) was another valuable tool. The challenge is to harness electronic media in a coordinated, informative and relevant way - improved information on the website pointtopoint.co.uk had been a big help.

He thanked the Horserace Betting Levy Board for its grant, and sponsors for their support. In the 2013/14 season feed manufacturer Dodson & Horrell will have been on side for 27 unbroken years.

Young pointers making mark

Young horses provided an opportunity to showcase pointing at the sales, and some good results in the ring were very satisfying. In conjunction with the Jockey Club, the PPORA continued to sponsor the mares' maiden series.

The Horse and Rider Sponsorship Schemes raise useful sums of money. Over seven per cent of horses and 21 per cent of riders had signed up, a help for them as costs rise.

The MFHA's continuing and generous discount on qualification rates for members was welcome, and he thanked the committee - they act as a voice for members whose views did not need to be stored until the AGM.

He concluded by saying it was vital to remain true to point-to-pointing's core values as an amateur sport.



Richard Fuller
Core values still key

Remarkable bond that feeds on success

Dodson & Horrell deserves recognition for its continued support of the Point-to-Point Owners' & Riders' Association club members' series for novice riders.

Sponsorship in any sport has a shelf life, but when it brings continued brand awareness there are huge benefits for both sides - so it is that the Northamptonshire-based feed specialists are

embarking on their 27th year in point-to-pointing.

The company's series involves a number of qualifying races - restricted to riders who have not ridden more than three winners at the season's kick-off - and leads to a £1,000 final at Tabley in Cheshire in May.

Bleuvito, owned and trained in Herefordshire by Stan Turner and ridden by Bethan Eckley, won the bumper

prize when the race took place last season. Conditions for the 2014 final have been opened up (see North West news, page 50).

www.dodsonandhorrell.com

Nutritional Helpline
0845 345 2627.



Bleuvito (Bethan Eckley)
takes the Tabley final

www.sweetphotography.com

Champagne with Rosie for Charlotte



Will Biddick, Charlotte Davis and John Meaden with Champagne Rosie

Champagne Rosie sluiced to victory in last season's Jockey Club/PPORA Mares' Maiden Series when accumulating 23 points and becoming a training triumph for Yeovil's Charlotte Davis, writes Charlotte Russell.

Her mare, a seven-year-old daughter of Shambo out of the winning hurdler Sharp Dance, is owned and was bred by PPORA member John Meaden, 86, a retired farmer from Yetminster in Dorset. Initially Meaden put her into training under rules with Bob Buckler, but says: "She was useless over hurdles, so I took her home. One day, Angela [Charlotte's mother], who is a friend of the family, said 'Why not let me run her in points?'. I said 'Take the useless thing - I won't pay, but you can keep the prize money'. Anyway, she just loves fences, and is a different mare."

Based at the family's dairy farm, Charlotte reckons the key to sweetening Champagne Rosie was to be very kind and ask her everything, rather than telling her what to do. She has nine pointers this season, and says: "I treat all the horses as individuals, but Champagne Rosie like a Princess! We vary their exercise to avoid boredom and make use of bridledways, as well as nearby grass gallops, hurdles and fences for schooling. I also like to compete them in dressage, show jumping and hunter trials."

The Mares' Maiden Series was the target from the beginning of the season as she had been going so well at home. Described by her trainer as a very tough mare, Charlotte says: "It may look as though we ran her a lot, but within a couple of days of each race she was bouncing, so we kept running!"

This season the team will be challenging for the Connolly's Red Mills Intermediate series with the final at Cheltenham the target, a race Charlotte's mother won with Massimo in 2008. An added bonus of winning the Mares' Series is that she will double any prize money she gains the first time she runs at any Jockey Club Racecourse, of which Cheltenham is one. She will once again be ridden by Will Biddick.

Proud owner, Meaden, who admits he did come to a financial arrangement in time, added: "I'm hooked again now, and could have three with Charlotte this season."

Become a member and save money

Membership of the Point-to-Point Owners' & Riders' Association gives owners and riders the chance to get involved in more than 90 races each season, to have a voice within the sport and take advantage of money-saving offers.

PPORA members receive copies of Pointer magazine, plus e-newsletters, and if they want to raise an issue they can do so through local representatives (see list, page 30) who attend several committee meetings (dates, page 30). Alternatively they can make a point and vote at the AGM on May 30 - by contacting the secretary in advance they can place an item for discussion on the agenda.

All members can take advantage of a 10% discount on their horse or horses' point-to-point subscription rate, thanks to an initiative created by the MFHA - contact the PPORA office which will confirm membership to the relevant hunt. In addition, a number of saddlers and riding-kit suppliers will allow money off a range of items on production of a current PPORA membership card.

Annual membership of the PPORA is £30 for owners (or £25 by standing order), £25 for riders (£22 s/o), £45 for a husband and wife (£40 s/o) and £65 for groups or partnerships. Life membership is £300.

Details on methods of payment, including online by PayPal, can be found on the PPORA website at www.ppora.co.uk.

Tom - a true champion of rural life

Tom Bannister's death in a car accident at the age of 48 cost the sport one of its greatest enthusiasts, but deprived the world of one of its loveliest characters.

An owner of point-to-pointers, Tom was a national sponsor and a former committee member of the PPORA - his father, Michael, is a past chairman of the Association, his brother Nick is a former amateur rider and now an owner, and his nephew Harry is a rising star on the Yorkshire point-to-point circuit.

Tom was a joint-master of the Pendle Forest & Craven Hunt, and also a driving force behind the pack's point-to-point at Heslaker. As head of his family's Coniston Hotel he took little convincing that it should become the first sponsor of the leading owners' award, and, in the hotel's name, he also funded the champagne toast which is now a feature of the PPORA's annual lunch at Stratford. He was an acknowledged charity fundraiser.

An enormous congregation attended St Peter's Church at Coniston in June for the funeral service, at which Tom's 11-year-old daughter, Louise, paid a moving tribute to her father.

The thoughts of Tom's many friends in the PPORA, and also those far beyond the sport, remain with his family, in particular his parents, Michael and Ethne, who have been such long-standing PPORA members and supporters.



Tom Bannister
Loved hunt racing

Renney an inspiration to amateurs

David Renney, who runs a business making veterinary equipment for cattle and pharmaceutical products for horses, became a PPORA national champion last season.

He took the Dick Woodhouse Trophy given to the leading owner/rider thanks to four wins on All Great N Theory, trained by Julie Marles. In doing so he served a reminder that point-to-pointing is open to riders from wide-ranging ages and opportunities. Those four wins doubled the tally he had achieved in the previous 25 years, but his partnership with seven-year-old All Great N Theory was more than a match for younger riders who work full time in racing.



Renney and Julie Marles at the PPORA lunch

Of his title win, he says: "It gave me a lot of pleasure, being a much bigger dose of success than I've had in the past. I was also pleased for everyone involved with the horse, including my wife Donna, who picked him out at Doncaster Sales, to Marcella Bayliss, who prepped him, and Julie."

Renney, 53, says: "The overall standard of riding has improved so much since I started, and that makes for a much better spectacle, but it would be a shame if it deterred people like me. I am always going around saying to people who ride, but are outside the sport, why not have a go at point-to-pointing? It's given me so much pleasure."

Does he feel overawed by younger, wannabe jockeys? Apparently not. He says: "After one smart, young rider tried to come up my inside and failed, we were pulling up and he said: 'You should have retired a long time ago!' I replied: 'I will, when you beat me in a finish.' It was all forgotten by the time we reached the changing tent."

Diary Dates

Sunday, December 8, Barbury Castle Racecourse, near Marlborough Point-to-Point Owners' & Riders' Club meeting

Committee Meetings: Wednesday, December 4; Wednesday, April 9 and Wednesday, August 6

Friday, May 30, Stratford Racecourse PPORA annual general meeting at noon, followed by lunch, awards ceremony and evening racing

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Our big day of the year

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Talented youngsters gain due recognition



Wilkinson Sword (sponsored by Dodson & Horrell)

Charlie Deutsch was 16 and in his first season point-to-pointing when he won the Wilkinson Sword, given to the leading male rider under 21 without a win at the season's start.

Charlie, from Ebrington in Gloucestershire, rode seven winners, including three on Victory Parade, trained by his father, John, a former rider.

Now a conditional jockey, Charlie (seen receiving the Sword from Chris Gordon of D&H) says: "My boss, Charlie Longsdon, suggested I should become a conditional, but I'll always remember my season in pointing. I felt very proud collecting the Wilkinson Sword, because a lot of good riders have won it in the past.

"Riding in pony races set me up for pointing, and pointing set me up to ride against professionals. Pointing is fun – I loved every minute of it."

Princess Royal Trophy (sponsored by Windsor Insurance)

Winning on your first ride in a point-to-point is fairly rare, but Holly Harper grasped the chance when partnering Mirage Dore at Alnwick.

Edinburgh-born Holly, 19, had three further rides during the season on the mare Radharc Na Mara, and rode two more winners, enough to take the Princess Royal Trophy for the leading woman under 21. She says: "I was quite nervous going to the lunch, because I felt there were others who deserved it more than me – I was just lucky to sit on two good horses."

Radharc Na Mara (meaning view of the sea) is trained by Holly having been bought with help from her dad Grant, granddad Jim and uncle Tom. Holly has since been nominated for a Magic Moments in Northern Racing award for landing the PPORA's title and is pictured (right), collecting her trophy from Richard Fuller.



Grateful thanks for long-service to the sport

Chairman Richard Fuller presented thank-you gifts to three members of the PPORA's committee who had knocked up a cricket score in terms of their joint service.

Cynthia Higgon (top left) had been involved since the second ever meeting, following the Association's creation in 1977. Midlands' representative John Docker (top right) and Len Vickery (lower left) from Wessex had also served the cause, posting more than 20 years each.

There was also a gift for PPORA secretary Jeanette Dawson (lower right), who is the lunch organiser. Her 25 years of service has been hugely appreciated, not only by thousands of members, but also by the six chairmen she has served under.



No more Monday blues with on-line entries



are printed on the letter of confirmation sent by Weatherbys' racing services team. Users can log into the site as soon as they receive their username and password (which can be altered to something more memorable at the first login) and then they can begin making entries.

The process couldn't be easier - simply choose the meeting, select a race, then pick your horse, colours, rider and address for car park passes. Multiple entries? No problem - one click and you're back to the meeting menu, ready to start the process again. Once all entries are made, whether for one horse or three, two races or ten, payment can be made in one simple step, either by Weatherbys account or using your credit/debit card via the secure Sagepay system.

There is a comprehensive 'help' section that guides the new user, step-by-step, through the process, and the Point-to-Point Racing Company team is always on hand to offer guidance - call the office on 01933 304795.

A record number of meetings have signed up to the PtPRC's entries service for 2013/14, and you can find details of all meetings, races and conditions in the Point-to-Point & Hunter Chase Race Planner (priced at £30, plus postage) - an essential publication for all owners, keepers and riders.



On-line entries for races, a service provided to the sport by the Point-to-Point Racing Company (PtPRC), are proving increasingly popular with owners.

Launched at the start of the 2011/12 season, www.pointtopointentries.co.uk provides owners and keepers with a secure and easy-to-use alternative to traditional ways of entering horses for point-to-points. Over a quarter of entries taken through the PtPRC in 2012/13 were made on-line, and that number is expected to rise significantly during the season ahead.

Making entries online is quick, secure, and, most importantly, simple, even for the most ardent technophobes. A unique username and password is issued with the first hunters' certificate registered by an owner for the season; the details

Sport's national website making strides

A new chapter in the development of the sport's national website, pointtopoint.co.uk, was opened at the beginning of 2013 with enhanced entries and results.

The results section now features comments in running for every race held since the start of the 2011/12 season. The website is initially updated with details of the first three past the post on the day of a meeting, followed by full results by Wednesday mornings.

Entries now display details of each horse's owner and keeper, and from the start of the 2013/14 season will also show each horse's most recently available rating (supplied by an independent ratings analyst). Development is also taking place to make the entries and results pages more 'printer friendly'.

A 12-months subscription to pointtopoint.co.uk costs just £40 and offers members exclusive early access to entries, results and form, while for an additional £40 Members can also have access to the Viewpoint Video service, which now covers almost 50% of meetings.



Annual absorbs customers' points

Following a customer survey over the summer, some changes have been made to the format of Pointing 2014. Essays on each horse (by Martin Harris and Paul Champion) and results with comments in running will be published in the style familiar to long-standing subscribers to pointing form books. Maps for every UK course are also being published in one easy-to-use A-Z section.

Pointing 2014 (£39 plus postage), also features a comprehensive review of the previous season, a thorough statistical section, and dozens of photos by the sport's leading photographers, making it the perfect companion for anyone involved in point-to-pointing.

Other publications from the PtPRC include the Loose-Leaf Form Guide (£220, includes a free copy of Pointing 2014), a must for anyone who takes their form study seriously, while for those who prefer a quick snap-shot of a horse's ability there is the Weekly Ratings Service, priced at £45.

Details of all products can be found at www.weatherbysshop.co.uk, including some money-saving offers. Orders can also be placed over the phone on 01933 304792.



Bundles save money

Try these PtPRC money-saving offers:

- **Membership Package Bundle** - the Planner (rrp £30, plus postage) & 12-months pointtopoint.co.uk membership subscription (rrp £40) - **£65 (Save £5)**
- **Membership Plus Package Bundle** - the Planner (rrp £30, plus postage) & a 12-months pointtopoint.co.uk Plus Membership subscription (rrp £80) - **£100 (Save £10)**
- **The Planner & Pointing 2014 Bundle** - the Planner (rrp £30, plus postage) & Pointing 2014 (rrp £39, plus postage) - **£69 (Free postage - Save £5)**

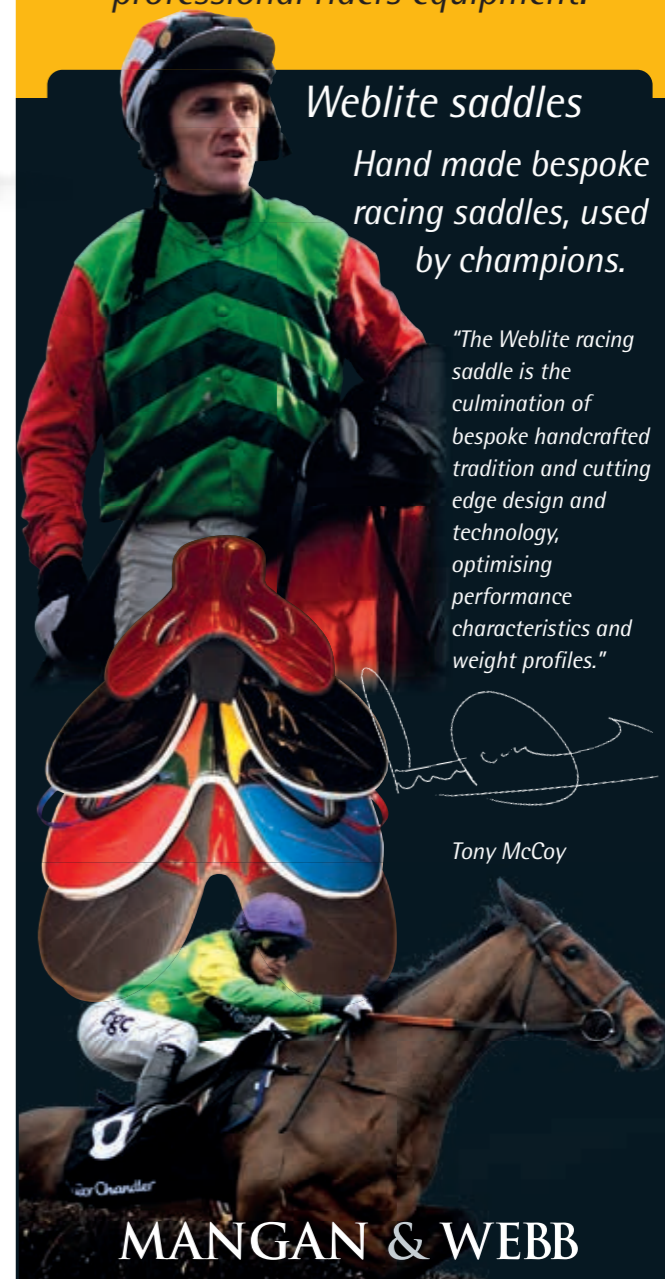
Special Twitter offers

Some exclusive offers will be available to Twitter followers every Friday between 12pm-2pm until the end of 2013. To take advantage, simply follow @pointtopoint and keep an eye out for #P2PSAVINGS for weekly offers.

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Kemp leaves the Board – but remains very much on board

Owner/trainer brings hands-on experience to the sport's commercial arm



Heather Kemp's term as an independent member of the Point-to-Point Authority's Board reaches a conclusion at the end of this year, but she retains an important role within the sport as a director of the Point-to-Point Racing Company.

The Northamptonshire-based PtPRC is a commercial venture jointly-owned by Weatherbys and the PPA, and Kemp sees her role as 'the go between', the hands-on owner/trainer who can oversee the investment made by the Authority and help develop the business alongside its co-partner.

She says: "The sport has an obligation to maintain accurate and comprehensive records of the performance of all horses and riders, a) because of the Delegation Agreement by which the PPA operates under the Regulation of the British Horseracing Authority, and b) for its own benefit."

Collating and inputting information from nearly 200 meetings does not come cheap, nor does the hardware and software that processes it. She adds: "Unlike the Irish system, there is no central funding available to fulfil this function, so the company has to be self-financing. This is achieved by the sale of data, both printed and electronic, and the provision of services. As more and more information is being accessed and processed online it was imperative to preserve the ownership of point-to-pointing data."

"Income from web site memberships and the sale of data to third parties – such as Horse & Hound and Racing Plus – represent a key part of the company's income alongside the traditional printed publications such as the Planner, the Loose Leaf and Pointing 2014."

As someone whose involvement in the sport includes the hunting, preparation and racing of point-to-point horses, Kemp has taken a particular interest in ways of making entries easier, an area in which the PtPRC has broken new ground.

It offers the sport a centralised entry-taking service, and although some meetings prefer to handle the paperwork themselves, others have bought into the technology.

As Kemp says: "The ability to make entries online at any time of day [before entries close] has to benefit horsey people who spend most of their daytime outside. The eventing world has no option – for competitors in that sport it is online entries or not at all – and it has worked for them for almost a decade. Even local shows now have their own web sites and prefer entries online."

On a separate, but related issue, she says: "Unfortunately the sport has its share of owners who are slow or reluctant to pay entry fees – at cost to the organising hunts – but online payment on account, or by debit/credit card, eliminates the problem. In addition, the PtPRC's entry-taking service

automatically checks horse eligibility, which can save an owner or trainer embarrassment and prevent delays in the system."

In relation to the PtPRC's entry-taking service it is worth noting:

- Anyone other than the owner making an entry by telephone must have a registered Authority to Act - the change of ownership record is also to be amended so a new Authority to Act may be registered should the horse be sold during the season
- Name recognition has been introduced so horses may be selected by typing the first few letters of the name, rather than selecting from a list
- To prevent the database clogging up with numerous variations of colours – and to improve racecard accuracy – colours will now be added to hunters' certificates and only those colours may be used
- There are currently 72 keepers (trainers) who have eight or more horses in their care – they will be offered telephone tutorials by the PtPRC to encourage online entries
- Entry software will store historic credit/debit card details for re-use (in a similar manner to many online payment systems)
- The online entries' icon, seen on pointtopoint.co.uk, can be duplicated on other web sites to provide an increasing number of points of access to that service

Ratings a plus for competitors and racegoers, but shared passwords under scrutiny

For the coming season, subscribers to pointtopoint.uk will be able to study entries for the weekend ahead – with details of owner, keeper and ratings – by Tuesday evenings, and in a printer-friendly format.

However, in a bid to reduce cases of people sharing passwords that give access to this information early in the week – and thereby depriving the sport of income – the automatic log-out period has been reduced. Online banking systems use a similar process to increase security.

If one subscription login record is being used consecutively the users will be logged out and the log-in barred until released by the PtPRC. Users who believe their password has been shared with others should change it.

Intermediate races and trainers' titles in Connolly's Red Mills package

Feed specialists Connolly's Red Mills has enjoyed some superb hunter chase finals to their intermediate series of point-to-points.



The icing will be placed on the cake if their 2012/13 winner, the Alan Hill-trained Harbour Court, builds on his exciting potential and lands one of this season's big hunter chases at Cheltenham or Stratford.

Connolly's Red Mills is staging 20 qualifiers – starting at Barbury Caste on December 8 and concluding at Kingston St Mary on April 21 – and also sponsors the national trainers' awards.

They fall into two categories – for yards of seven or fewer horses, and for eight and above.

Maiden mares on Jockey Club's agenda

The Jockey Club continues its sponsorship of the mares' open maiden series, which has a potentially valuable bonus offer for the overall winner.



After winning one of the Jockey Club-backed races any further victories or places a mare gains accrues points. The horse with the most points takes the title and a cheque for £500 – which next season will be handed over at the national dinner and awards ceremony – and when the champion makes her first appearance at a Jockey Club Racecourse, any prize money she wins is doubled.

Last year's victress, Champagne Rosie, is trained in Somerset by Charlotte Davis.

Bonhams back for men's open series

Bonhams, the privately-owned British auction house and a world leader in the sale of fine art and antiques, returns to sponsorship in the sport for the second year.



The Bonhams Men's Open Race Series will hold an additional five qualifying point-to-points in the upcoming season, giving a total of 20. A hunter chase final on April 30 at Cheltenham's evening meeting, won last year by the Pauline Harkin-trained Doctor Kingsley, will complete the series.

Bonhams' first qualifier will be held at Black Forest Lodge in Devon on January 12, and, following a nationwide tour, the series will return to the West Country for the final leg on April 21 at Trebudannon in Cornwall.

AGA for an owner, as well as a rider



That's Rhythm (Page Fuller) wins the AGA final in the colours of PPOA chairman Richard Fuller and his wife Charlotte

AGA is beefing up its sponsorship in point-to-pointing next season when giving one of its famous ovens to both a rider and an owner.



Riders have benefited from the company's largesse during the past two seasons, with Claire Hart and Jane Williams gaining ovens for becoming champions of AGA's ladies' championship.

Points gained during the AGA Ladies Open Race Series – which comprises 26 point-to-point qualifying races and a £10,000 hunters' chase final at Stratford on May 30 – will decide the riders' prize, while owners of any open horse (men's, mixed or ladies' races) could win an oven of their own.

The prize for the winner of both championships will be an AGA Dual Control electric cooker – 100% AGA, up to half the running costs. There will also be some fabulous new prizes for the winning owner and woman rider in AGA qualifiers.

In the women riders' championship the best five scores count towards the overall title, and there are double points in the final. The AGA Dual Control National Open Horse Championship is run on similar lines, except the best eight results count.

Horses which finish in the top three in any AGA qualifier, plus the winner of every other ladies' open race is eligible for the final.

AGA also sponsors 'The AGA Little Cookers of the Future' point-to-point pony racing finals.

A brief guide to the sport of point-to-pointing



When

Point-to-point racing takes place between the first weekend in December and the middle of June at venues around the British Isles.

Who

The **riders** range in age from 16 to 60-plus and are all amateurs. **Trainers**, also known as 'keepers', range from those who look after one or two horses to some with 30-plus. The horses' owners come from all sorts of backgrounds – some train their horses, others entrust that to a **keeper**.

The officials seen at race meetings – their roles range from stewarding (policing) races to weighing riders in and out, accepting declarations to run, acting as starters, liaising with sponsors and parking cars – are invariably trained volunteers from the local community.

Horses

The horses are thoroughbreds, although a handful of cross-bred hunters take part in hunt members' races. No horse that is younger than four can take part, although there is no upper-age limit and if a horse is healthy and enjoying racing they can compete into their middle teens, and occasionally a year or two after that.

Horses qualify for pointing when their owner pays a subscription to a hunt – the horse is then expected to follow hounds on at least four occasions.



Ponies, who are ridden by children aged nine to 15, are now a common sight at point-to-points that stage pony racing.

Races

There is a ladder of opportunity, starting with **maiden** races (for horses that have never won), followed by **restricted** (to the winners of a maiden race only), **intermediate** and **open** (meaning open to any horse). Other common events include **hunt members'** races, which are limited to horses who qualified with the organising hunt, confined races, which are for horses from a **confined** (local or regional) area, and **novice riders'** races, for riders with less than three winners at the season's start.

Organisers

Meetings are organised by hunts or clubs, and their fixtures are coordinated into a season of racing through the Point-to-Point Secretaries' Association (**PPSA**), which meets at regional and national level.

The Point-to-Point Authority (PPA) acts as the glue that holds the sport together. Its official roles are listed as 'administration, management, promotion and development (governance and strategy)'. Its office near Tetbury in Gloucestershire employs three full-time staff who field and deal with such wide-range issues as finding medical cover



for race meetings, organising seminars for numerous groups involved in the sport, helping riders with sponsorship, coordinating point-to-point pony racing and PPA Board meetings.

The Board comprises a representative from the key interested groups

– the PPSA, the Masters of Foxhounds Association (**MFHA**), the Owners' & Riders' Association (**PPORA**) and the **Jockey Club**, plus three independent members.

The Jockey Club used to provide an umbrella for point-to-pointing, acting in the same way as the present-day PPA Board and setting the sport's rules, known as Regulations. Those Regulations are now orchestrated by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) which also polices 'professional' Flat and jump racing. The BHA sets the sport's standards so that such elements as racecourse fences and ground conditions, medical and veterinary cover, the monitoring of riders' behaviour in races and the health and wellbeing of horses on race days are scrutinised and given uniformity.

Revenue streams

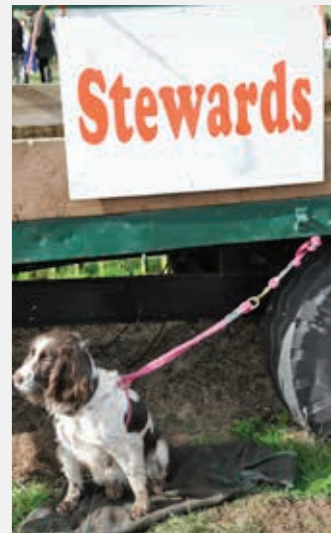
Point-to-pointing is an amateur sport, but needs money to promote itself and cover the costs that are inevitable in a nationally-run spectacle. Its biggest single source of income is an annual grant - £250,000 for 2013/14 – given by the Horserace Betting Levy Board (**HBLB**). Pointing justifies the grant – which is used to help maintain racing venues – by providing an introduction to racing under rules for owners, trainers, riders, horses and officials, and also by being a receptacle for numerous horses once their days in Flat or jump racing reach a conclusion.

Local and national sponsorship (see page 35) is another valuable income for the sport, providing prize money and advertising income – in turn the sport gives sponsors branding exposure. Owners and riders can help balance their costs through the Horse Sponsorship Scheme (**HSS**) and Riders' Sponsorship Scheme (**RSS**) – the PPA takes a small charge for administering the pair.

Race meetings derive money through entry fees paid by the horses' owners, through sponsorship (of races, fences etc), racecard advertising, trade stands, refreshment sales, and by charging the public to watch. They can use profits as they choose – hunts have the know-how and network of volunteers to stage most of the country's 190-plus fixtures, and they invariably keep profits to maintain their pack of hounds, staff and kennels, but overheads to stage a meeting involve such items as marquee and toilet hire, fence maintenance, running rail replacement, medical/veterinary cover and insurance.

Meetings also pay to the PPA fixture fees, which are collected along with other revenue streams such as management fees from the **PPSA** and **pony pacing**, from owners, individual hunts who contribute per pointer qualifying in their country, and from riders. They contribute through a small administration charge when applying for the mandatory Riders' Qualification Certificate (**RQC**), which is primarily insurance cover for when they ride in point-to-points.

The PPA also has a commercial arm which it owns in partnership with Weatherbys Ltd. Called the Point-to-Point Racing Company (PtPRC) it produces and sells various publications and data, runs a telephone information service called Talking Point and the national website www.pointtopoint.co.uk. It also produces race cards and takes entries on behalf of a growing number of race meetings. Any profit the sport makes from PtPRC activities is used to promote itself.





Feeding to win

Catherine Austen contacted trainers around Britain to find out what goes into their horses' feed pots – and when



What supplements do you feed?

I'm not really one for supplements – only electrolytes when needed, a slosch of corn oil every night, and some Blue Chip, which is fantastic for helping develop muscle mass. It's expensive but worth it.

What about fibre?

We feed haylage made by a local company. We don't quite feed it ad-lib - enough so that they've always got some in their stable, but not enough to gorge on. We have it tested every couple of months for quality and levels of protein.

Fussy eaters - how do you tempt them?

We had a mare called Jacks Present who was terribly fussy. I'd have to feed her five or six times a day, just a little bit at a time. That's why I feed late in the evenings so horses don't feel over-faced by large feeds.

Does feeding change the day before a race?

No, not at all.

And on the day?

Our Red Mills adviser is keen that we get forage into a horse's stomach before any exercise as they say it stops the stomach acid sloshing around. We like to keep feeding simple and structured and don't do anything different except add electrolytes after racing.

What do you feed when horses first come in from grass?

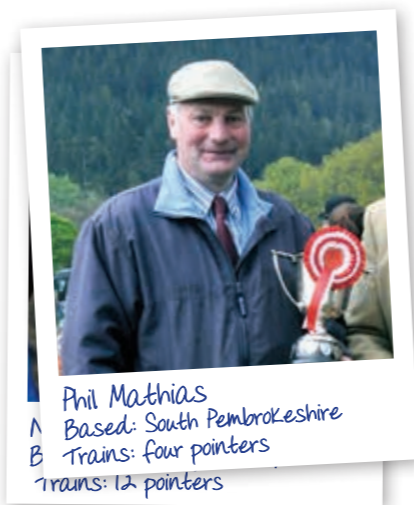
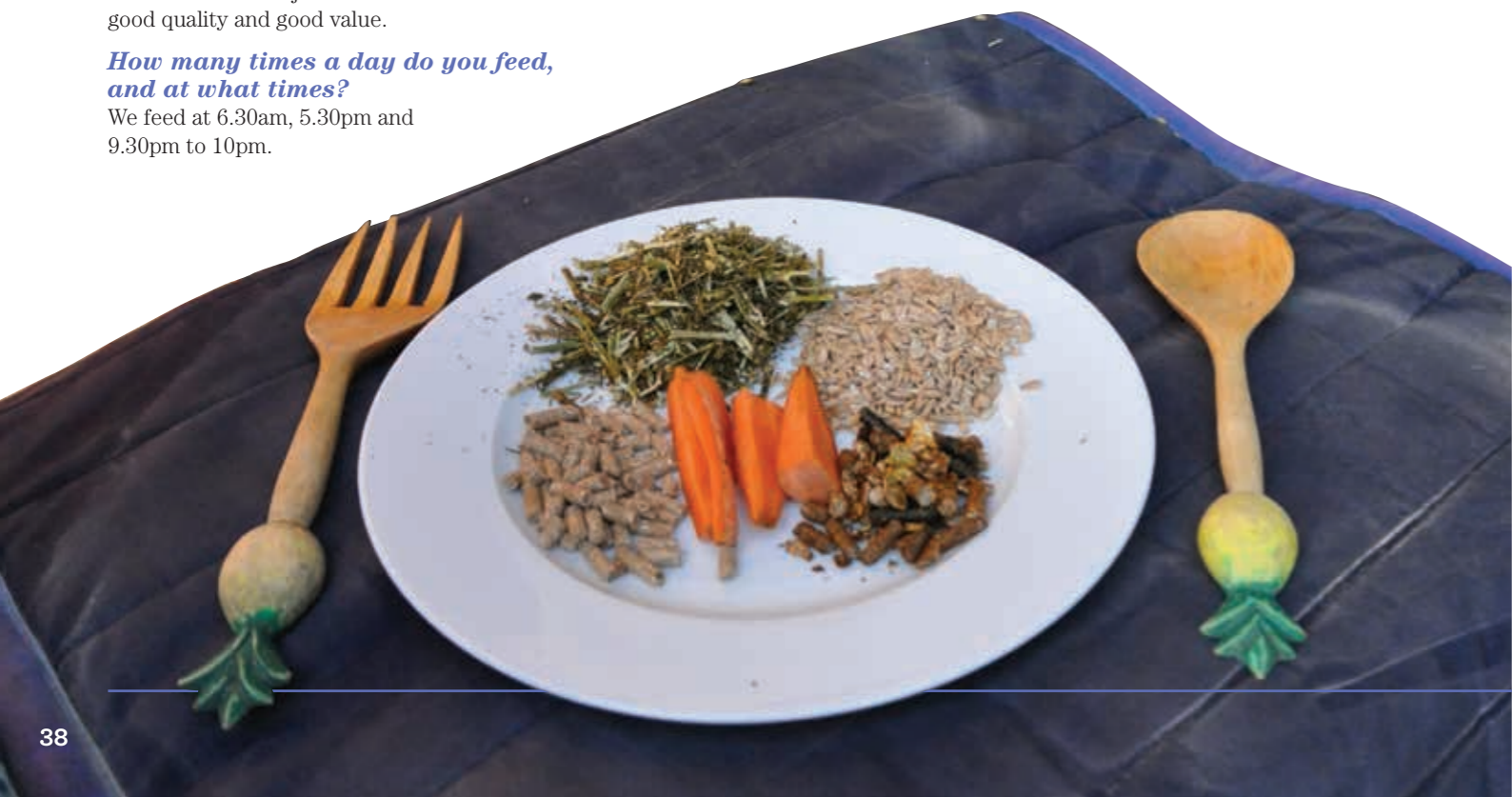
It depends on how well they've done over the summer, but we generally start feeding them at grass about two weeks before they come in. We feed Connolly's Red Mills, and we'd start on about a scoop of mix or cool nuts.

What about when they are in full training?

We generally feed 2½ to 3 scoops of 14% protein racing feed, half mix and half nuts with a handful of Mollichaff. I don't feed alfalfa – I think it's just dust and bits – but I think Mollichaff is good quality and good value.

How many times a day do you feed, and at what times?

We feed at 6.30am, 5.30pm and 9.30pm to 10pm.



What type of feed do you use?

We mostly feed Connolly's Red Mills – it does exactly what it says on the bag. We use racehorse cubes, or, for mares, horsecare cubes, which are lower in starch.

How often and at what time do you feed?

We feed three times a day – 7.30am, 4pm and 10pm, equal feeds of about 4lb.

Do you feed supplements?

No, we haven't done for six or seven years and the horses look and train well.

Fussy eaters – how do you tempt them?

We put a few carrots in their feed, but really we turn out as much as we can, which definitely makes them eat better.

Does your feeding routine change on a raceday?

No. They might get a slightly larger breakfast, and after racing we try to turn them out for an hour when they get back to pick at some grass, then it's back to normal.

What about water on a raceday?

They get water until the moment they get on the lorry – I don't believe in restricting it.

Do you feed hard food before they start work for the season?

It depends on the season. We don't feed in the field unless we have to – the grass has been great this autumn so we haven't needed to.

What about when they are in full training?

We feed Dodson & Horrell racehorse cubes, and might add microfeed, barley rings or a more oil-based food depending on the individual horse. They get ¼ of a scoop each time.

What about fibre?

They get ad-lib haylage, which we grow ourselves.

What about supplements?

We feed a multi-vitamin called Pro-pell once they are in full work, garlic and a bit of cod liver oil.

Fussy feeders – how do you tempt them?

We don't have much trouble with fussy feeders, which I think is down to feeding four times a day. But if we did I'd try microfeed, which is finer than a mix, very palatable and high-energy so you don't need to feed as much to get the same amount of digestible energy.



What do you feed when horses first come in from grass?

When they first come up they have a scoop of homegrown oats with Bailey's Oat Balancer, go on the walker and then get turned out again.

What about when they are in full training?

They get five scoops a day – obviously depending on the horse, 1½ at 7am, one at 1pm and two to three at 5pm. They have oats, oat balancer and soaked sugar beet pulp – the beet at night.

Do you feed supplements?

As few as possible. In February when they've been off the grass for a long time they get a measure of NAF Pink Powder and some Kolossian Blood Salts, which is a broad-spectrum vitamin and mineral supplement.

What about fibre?

We feed haylage grown at home, but it's quite dry and not too rich. It's wrapped, but it's nearly hay – and we feed it ad-lib.

Do you change the feeding routine around a race?

No, not at all.



MATINGS, FOALINGS, CELEBRATIONS, GONE TO GROUND



Pauline Harkin
Based: Banbury, Oxfordshire
Trains: 20 pointers

How many times do you feed a day and when?
They get three feeds - 7am, 3.30pm and 9pm. They get turned out after work and get a big haynet when they come in in the afternoon.

Do you feed supplements?
Yes - but tailored individually to each horse.

What about fibre?
We've recently changed to haylage as we had dreadful hay last winter. We make sure it is the second cut so it isn't too high in protein.

Fussy eaters - how do you tempt them?
It does help if they can go out in the field and keep their gut moving, but sugar beet is great for fussy horses.

What about on a raceday?
We increase their electrolytes before and after but try not to change too much. I do give them a big haynet on the way home. It's a long day and the slight risk of choking is worth it to have a happy horse who has enjoyed their day.



What do you feed when horses first come in from grass?
We give them a little bit of hard food - 3kg a day - when they first come up, and step that up when they start doing proper work. You don't want to feed too much until they are working or you get empty saddles! We feed Dodson & Horrell.
What about when they are in full work?
They get 7kg of Dodson & Horrell racehorse cubes with hot soaked sugar beet and some oil.

Congratulations
Ruth Tutton, the former South Midlands' press officer and rider, married Bruce Cook at the end of May.

John Daniell
Gloucestershire's John Daniell, who passed away in September at the age of 91, was one of the sport's great riders.
Men's champion in 1961, he rode the first of 175 winners on Comet's Tail in 1947, and ten years later rode a Cheltenham Festival winner when Gay Roger, owned by Lucy Jones, took the United Hunts' Cup. Other good horses he rode for Jones included Bartlemy Boy, Flippan Lad and Corn Star.
Under Daniell the latter pair each won a division of the 1961 Lady Dudley Cup, the only time a rider achieved that feat. His 40 victories under Rules included two Aintree Fox Hunter triumphs, on April Queen in 1960 and four years later on Aerial III.
Having hung up his boots aged 49 he became a steward at Chepstow and also stood at numerous point-to-point meetings, while he was clerk of the course at the Berkeley's track at Woodford for 35 years. Hunting and cricket remained passions throughout his life.
Daniell's wife, Buster, predeceased him.

Anthony Howland Jackson
A well-known owner and a PPORA committee member for the East Anglian region, Anthony Howland Jackson passed away in August after a lengthy battle with cancer.
His interest in pointing started during his school days and he later bought his first horse, Wordsworth, from Joe Turner in the mid-1980s. Richard & Auriol Wilson trained for Howland Jackson in the early days, but when they retired Ruth Hayter took on the role. From her yard St Gregory became champion pointer in 1998 with nine wins.
More recently Howland Jackson's horses have been trained by Simon Andrews, who saddled his final winner, Cooley's Flyer, at Northaw in May.

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Richard Fynn and Sophie Fynn



Previous Appointment to The Late Queen Mother 1979-2008



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The current role of The Jockey Club

Some people still assume The Jockey Club governs racing and point-to-pointing – it doesn't, but it is very influential. Richard Russell looks at its roles, and in a separate article below analyses the hunters' chase scene



The annual hunters' chase evening at Jockey Club-owned Cheltenham

Given its leadership role at the heart of British racing it is sometimes forgotten The Jockey Club transferred governance of point-to-pointing to the then British Horseracing Board (BHB) 20 years ago.

That was in 1993, followed, in 2006, by the handing over of responsibility for regulation – the rules of the sport – to the newly-formed Horseracing Regulatory Authority (HRA). A year later the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) was created through a merger of the BHB and HRA to provide independent governance, regulation and administration of British racing.

So what roles does The Jockey Club now undertake? Founded in 1750, today it is the largest commercial group in British horseracing. Operating under a modern corporate structure, its assets include Jockey Club Racecourses, involving 15 courses including Cheltenham, Aintree, Epsom and Newmarket.

It maintains more than 5,000 acres through Jockey Club Estates, its land management and property arm, including 3,000 acres of world-class training grounds at Newmarket and Lambourn. Close to 3,000 horses are trained regularly on the group's gallops and a fair number of pointers take advantage of the quality facilities, with some travelling from afar.

The National Stud in Newmarket has thrived since it was transferred to The Jockey Club from Government as a loss-making operation in 2008, and Racing Welfare, which supports those who work or have worked in the thoroughbred industry, and their dependents, count upon The Jockey Club as its single shareholder.

Most importantly, while The Jockey Club group is now the commercial powerhouse of British racing, it is governed by Royal Charter to act for the long-term good of the sport in all that it does. This means putting every penny it makes back into British racing, as well as using its influence as a force for good in the sport. In fact it could be said that today The Club's influence has never been greater or more positive.

Last year, the group achieved record turnover of more than £150m, with attendances on its 15 racecourses of 1.8 million paying customers and a record contribution to racing's prize money from its own resources of more than £16m. In the last 10 years alone, The Jockey Club has distributed more than £350m in prize-money and invested more than £155m in state-of-the-art facilities for participants and customers over the same period. The most iconic project is just getting underway: the £45m new grandstand and broader development at Cheltenham Racecourse, which will be completed before the 2016 Festival.

Pertinently for us, The Club has never lost its huge interest in and support of point-to-pointing.



Richard Russell
Jockey Club's PPA board member

When the Point-to-Point Authority (PPA) was founded in 2008, The Club became one of the four shareholders, holds one of the four appointed seats on the board and maintains an active interest in all matters concerning pointing.

The board member representing The Jockey Club is requested, on an annual basis, to make a presentation to its Board of Stewards on the health of point-to-pointing as an important part of British racing. Many Jockey Club members are actively involved in our sport as owners, parents of riders and organisers of fixtures, and, in some five cases, members own courses that stage meetings. Furthermore, of

approximately 112 hunters' chases that take place, consistently more than 30 have been staged within Jockey Club Racecourses, including our two Foxhunter championships.

It is also worth remembering that it was the Jump Racing Review, conducted in 2003 by Jockey Club Racecourses (at the time called Racecourse Holdings Trust), that recommended the introduction of pony racing to the UK. As a result, we now have numerous races run annually on point-to-point courses and licensed racecourses, with a growing following. Most recently, The Jockey Club has extended its commercial support to the pointing world through the sponsorship of The Jockey Club Mares' Maiden Series, which is about to commence its third season.

Long may the bond between The Jockey Club and racing and point-to-pointing continue and be actively valued.

Fall in hunters' chases in line with horse numbers

Sadly, but not unexpectedly, the number of hunters' chases scheduled in 2014 has been trimmed from recent levels.

In each of the last four seasons, 112 races were staged annually, but over that period hunters' certificate numbers have declined, as has the number of horses in licensed trainers' yards. For this reason a total of 101 races are scheduled in the coming season.

In the 2012/13 season, average runner numbers in our races had fallen to 8.6 per race, but this figure remained above the same measure in all steeplechases of 7.8. Hopefully after this reduction in our race numbers, a return to more than 10 runners per race can be achieved, as was the case not so long ago. The races that have been dropped have not filled well in recent seasons and were run at times when there were plenty of other racing opportunities.

The season commences with a new addition at Taunton on January 6, one of half a dozen hunters' chases during that

month. Early-season races again proved well supported and ultra-competitive in 2013, and were contested by many potential Festival runners, but two were abandoned to frost, and another three to waterlogging.

It has been apparent in recent seasons that there have been too many races in the two weeks after the Cheltenham evening meeting, resulting in a high percentage of races in that period suffering small and uncompetitive fields. Soon after the end of this period falls the evening card at Fontwell Park, first run there last season, and a likely beneficiary from the reduction of races. This meeting should be further improved by the opening of the conditions of two of the three races restricted to horses who qualified with hunts in close proximity, while the two-miles-six-furlongs open will be for women riders only.

Three other women-only races have again been scheduled as before – at Cheltenham, Wincanton and the AGA Final at Stratford. Other special races that continue to feature are the three mares-only races at Wetherby in March, at the Cheltenham evening which falls in April and Fontwell in mid-

May. Two of these did not fill that well in their first season, but it was decided to persevere with this innovation.

Races with less than eight declared runners hit an all-time high of 40% (we did again better the figure for all chases) but we hopefully will improve this figure going forward with the reduced fixture list in place.

We should be grateful to the racecourses staging hunters' chases, and in more cases than not an improved money prize fund was paid in 2013 to the year previously. From the draft schedule it looks as though there will be further increase in 2014. In numerous cases the prize-money figure printed in the Planner was lower than that on offer on the day, and this might be true again in the coming season.

Eliminations due to the safety factor were at a historic low of 13 (six in the CGA Foxhunter Chase, three in the pointto-point couk John Corbet Cup) for the whole of last season, and a further 11 horses were eliminated as a result of insufficient racecourse stables.

The season closes again with the four hunters' chase finale at Stratford on May 30. I would ask you to support the new reduced programme with both runners and foot-fall on the course – the BHA assure me that should horse numbers recover sufficiently and races fill there would be a move to expand our fixture list once more.



Action from Fontwell's new evening meeting – the opening of races should boost runners

These are a few of their favourite things ...

Interviews by Charlotte Russell

John Grossick Photography



Jamie Hamilton
Joint-champion hunter chase rider
Lives Malton, Yorkshire

Favourite Horse is Tartan Snow because I had my biggest win to date on him in Aintree's Fox Hunters' Chase.

Favourite Race has to be the Fox Hunters' at Aintree. I had always wanted to ride in it, so winning it was brilliant! I'm hoping to have a ride in it again next season.

Favourite Racecourse can only be Aintree, for all of the above reasons!



Jane Williams
Former national women's champion
Lives Enville, Staffordshire

Favourite horse is Little Brown Bear, who was owned by George and Ann Barlow and won ten races before his retirement five years ago. I just loved the way he jumped, his attitude and he gave me a real thrill when I rode him. He won lots of ladies' races for me.

Favourite Race has to be the AGA Ladies' Championship final that I won on Billyvodan in 2011, when the race was run at Cheltenham.

Favourite Racecourse is Eyton-on-Severn. It feels like a true point-to-point course. You go round once and a bit and when you are out in the country you can't hear anything, you just have to ride. It is an old-fashioned type of course.



Josh Guerriero
Devon & Cornwall men's champion
Lives Warwickshire

www.itonkphoto.com

Favourite Horse has to be Christy Beamish. Although I only rode him twice he gave me the biggest win of my career in the Aintree Fox Hunters' Chase.

Favourite Race is one I am very unlikely to ride in, but love watching – the Supreme Novices' Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival. It's always a good start to the week and great to see the young horses of the future.

Favourite Racecourse is Upcott Cross in Devon. I have ridden lots of winners there, it's a good galloping track with a great atmosphere, and once we are pointing there you know it is nearly the start of summer!



David Brace
Champion owner 2012/13
Lives Pyle, South Wales

Favourite Horse has to be Dawn Run. I followed her from her point-to-pointing days and she was such a tough mare. It was amazing that she could win a Champion Hurdle and a Gold Cup.

Favourite Race is Cheltenham's Fox Hunter Chase. It is the amateurs' Gold Cup and something that all point-to-pointers aspire to. It captures my imagination - hopefully one day...!

Favourite Racecourse is Chepstow. It's a very friendly course and a genuine test, a proper National Hunt course. I love the winter game!

Doug Harkin
Owner CRM & Bonham's finals winner, Doctor Kingsley
Lives Chipping Warden, Northants

Favourite Horse it's a bit obvious, but definitely Doctor Kingsley! He has really matured into a fine horse and we've had a lot of fun with him.

Favourite Race - I enjoy all mares' races and think it is great to have a series which encourages mares to progress and work their way through the ranks.

Favourite Racecourse has to be Cheltenham under rules, not least because Doctor Kingsley's two victories there have been very special. It is a proper test of courage and stamina with the uphill finish. On the point-to-point circuit it is Mollington, due to its similarity to Cheltenham.



Andrew Pennock
Yorkshireman, but East Anglian trainer (occasional rider)
Lives Tinworth Green, Suffolk

www.racehorsephotos.co.uk

Favourite Horse - Jokers Lad. He was given to my father by my grandfather who passed away shortly afterwards. The horse and I were the same age, seven, and he was my earliest memory of pointing. I was as addicted to the game then as I am now! Dad idolised the horse and I idolised my dad so it followed suit.

Favourite Race I haven't won it yet – my aim is to win a hunters' chase. The race I have always loved is the Staintondale members' race. Competing in front of a home crowd and taking on friends is the best. I've been lucky enough to win it several times.

Favourite Racecourse must be Charm Park, home of the Staintondale meeting and a true test. It generally offers good ground and your horse needs to have enough speed to travel, but enough stamina to keep going.

Pony Racing Fixture List 2014

Meeting	Course	2014
CAMBRIDGESHIRE WITH ENFIELD CHACE	HORSEHEATH	Sunday, February 02, 2014
MID DEVON	BLACK FOREST LODGE	Sunday, February 02, 2014
SOUTH POOL HARRIERS	BUCKFASTLEIGH	Sunday, February 16, 2014
VINE & CRAVEN	BARBURY RACECOURSE	Sunday, February 16, 2014
WAVENEY HARRIERS	HIGHAM	Sunday, February 16, 2014
EAST ANGLIAN HUNTS CLUB	MARKS TEY	Sunday, February 23, 2014
SOUTH EAST HUNT CLUB	CHARING	Sunday, February 23, 2014
DUKE OF BEAUFORTS	DIDMARTON	Saturday, March 01, 2014
TYNEDALE	CORBRIDGE	Sunday, March 02, 2014
BLACKMORE & SPARKFORD VALE	CHARLTON HORETHORNE	Sunday, March 09, 2014
MID SURREY FARMERS DRAG	GODSTONE	Sunday, March 09, 2014
SUFFOLK	AMPTON	Sunday, March 09, 2014
NEW FOREST	LARKHILL	Saturday, March 15, 2014
BICESTER WITH WHADDON CHASE	WHITFIELD	Sunday, March 16, 2014
CURRE & LLANGIBBY	HOWICK	Sunday, March 16, 2014
DART VALE & HALDON HARRIERS	BUCKFASTLEIGH	Sunday, March 16, 2014
EAST ESSEX	MARKS TEY	Sunday, March 16, 2014
CRAWLEY & HORSHAM	PARHAM	Saturday, March 22, 2014
LANARKSHIRE & RENFREWSHIRE AND EGLINTON	OVERTON	Saturday, March 22, 2014
CROOME & WEST WARWICKSHIRE	UPTON-UPON-SEVERN	Sunday, March 23, 2014
HAMPSHIRE	HACKWOOD PARK	Sunday, March 23, 2014
MENDIP FARMERS	STON EASTON	Sunday, March 23, 2014
OAKLEY	BRAFIELD-ON-THE-GREEN	Sunday, March 23, 2014
AVON VALE	LARKHILL	Saturday, March 29, 2014
MONMOUTHSHIRE	LLANVAPLEY	Saturday, March 29, 2014
PUCKERIDGE	HORSEHEATH	Saturday, March 29, 2014
COTLEY	COTLEY	Sunday, March 30, 2014
EAST CORNWALL	GREAT TRETREW	Sunday, March 30, 2014
LEDBURY	MAISEMORE PARK	Sunday, March 30, 2014
SOUTHDOWN & ERIDGE	GODSTONE	Sunday, March 30, 2014
ESSEX	HIGH EASTER	Saturday, April 05, 2014
CHESHIRE FOREST	TABLEY	Sunday, April 06, 2014
COTSWOLD	ANDOVERSFORD	Sunday, April 06, 2014
EAST SUSSEX & ROMNEY MARSH	CHARING	Sunday, April 06, 2014
MORPETH	TRANWELL	Sunday, April 06, 2014
TEDWORTH	BARBURY RACECOURSE	Sunday, April 06, 2014
WEST WALES AREA CLUB	LYDSTEP	Sunday, April 06, 2014
BEDALE	HORNBY CASTLE	Saturday, April 12, 2014
LUDDLLOW	BITTERLEY	Saturday, April 12, 2014
OLD SURREY, BURSTOW & WEST KENT	PENSHURST	Saturday, April 12, 2014
WEST SOMERSET VALE	COTHELSTONE	Saturday, April 12, 2014
COTSWOLD VALE FARMERS	ANDOVERSFORD	Sunday, April 13, 2014
EGGESFORD	UPCOTT CROSS	Sunday, April 13, 2014
ASHFORD VALLEY	CHARING	Saturday, April 19, 2014
DARTMOOR	FLETE PARK	Saturday, April 19, 2014
ESSEX & SUFFOLK	HIGHAM	Saturday, April 19, 2014
LLANGEINOR	DUNRAVEN STUD	Saturday, April 19, 2014
NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE	SANDON	Saturday, April 19, 2014
OLD BERKSHIRE	LOCKINGE	Monday, April 21, 2014
SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE	LYDSTEP	Monday, April 21, 2014
STAINTONDALE	SHERIFF HUTTON	Monday, April 21, 2014
TAUNTON VALE	KINGSTON ST MARY	Monday, April 21, 2014
VINE & CRAVEN	HACKWOOD PARK	Monday, April 21, 2014
BERKELEY	WOODFORD	Saturday, April 26, 2014
CHIDDINGFOLD LECONFIELD & COWDRAY	PARHAM	Saturday, April 26, 2014
FARMERS BLOODHOUNDS	WHITFIELD	Saturday, April 26, 2014
AXE VALE	STAFFORD CROSS	Sunday, April 27, 2014
CHESHIRE	TABLEY	Sunday, April 27, 2014
TIVYSIDE & CARMARTHENSHIRE (JOINT MEETING)	LYDSTEP	Sunday, April 27, 2014
MODBURY HARRIERS	FLETE PARK	Saturday, May 03, 2014
LAUDERDALE	MOSSHOUSES	Sunday, May 04, 2014
RADNOR & WEST HEREFORD	COLD HARBOUR	Sunday, May 04, 2014
BANWEN MINERS	PENTRECLWYDAU	Monday, May 05, 2014
CATTISTOCK	LITTLEWINDSOR	Monday, May 05, 2014
ENFIELD CHACE WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNT	NORTHAW	Monday, May 05, 2014
NORTH LEDBURY	MAISEMORE PARK	Monday, May 05, 2014
KIMBLEWICK	KINGSTON BLOUNT	Saturday, May 10, 2014
WHEATLAND	CHADDESLEY CORBETT	Sunday, May 11, 2014
WESTON & BANWELL HARRIERS	COTHELSTONE	Wednesday, May 14, 2014
DULVERTON WEST	BRATTON DOWN	Sunday, May 18, 2014
GOLDEN VALLEY	BREDWARDINE	Sunday, May 18, 2014
GRAFTON	WHITFIELD	Sunday, May 18, 2014
KNUTSFORD RACES CLUB (Formerly North West Point-To-Point Club)	TABLEY	Sunday, May 18, 2014
MELTON HUNT CLUB	GARTHORPE	Sunday, May 18, 2014
WEST NORFOLK	FAKENHAM	Sunday, May 18, 2014
BERKS & BUCKS DRAGHOUNDS & SANDHURST DRAGHOUNDS	KINGSTON BLOUNT	Sunday, May 25, 2014
PEMBROKESHIRE	TRECOED	Sunday, May 25, 2014
ALBRIGHTON WOODLAND	CHADDESLEY CORBETT	Monday, May 26, 2014
SOUTH TETCOTT	UPCOTT CROSS	Monday, May 26, 2014
EXMOOR	BRATTON DOWN	Sunday, June 01, 2014
HAYDON	HEXHAM	Sunday, June 01, 2014
MEYNELL & SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	GARTHORPE	Sunday, June 01, 2014
TORRINGTON FARMERS	UMBERLEIGH	Saturday, June 14, 2014



AGA backs Little Cookers finals

Even manufacturer AGA is once again sponsoring 'The Little Cookers of the Future' pony racing finals, which take place at Garthorpe's Meynell & South Staffs' meeting on Sunday, June 1.

James Bowen took last season's 138cm race on Push The Button, Abbie McCain rode 148cm winner Little Bull, while Daniel Batchelor took the conditions event on Missoopsadaisey.

Pony planner tees up the season ahead

A second edition of the National Point-to-Point Pony Racing Planner will be available in the New Year.

Published by the Pony Racing Authority and Point-to-Point Authority, it contains conditions for every pony race held at point-to-points during 2014.

To obtain a copy email the Point-to-Point Authority (details below).

Useful contacts

www.ponyracingauthority.co.uk

www.pointtopoint.co.uk

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Kelk taking a measured approach

When it comes to engaging with equestrian sports you can buy your way to a rung near the top of the ladder, or graft to it through a series of small steps.

Even the second option requires steady cash input, but it is a route that has led Hampshire-based Sarah Kelk, 16, to the verge of making her debut in point-to-points and then under Rules. She does so having won last season's inaugural RaceTech-sponsored novice riders' series final at Garthorpe.

Sarah says: "I rode in my first pony race at the age of ten on a New Forest pony called Ginger. He hunted, show jumped and evented, but he wasn't quick enough to win races.

"Eventually we bought Dolphin Song, and last season I won twice on him, including the Race Tech novice riders' final at Garthorpe, and was placed several times.

"During the season I had been consistently beaten by Hartley Crouch, who was on a hot pony called Worth The Wait in the final. I knew I had to stick on his tail because if he got away I would not catch him.

"On the downhill run to the final bend I kicked on and was clear in the straight, but I had gone almost too early, and I could see Hartley's shadow coming up behind as we neared the line. It came just in time. After the race Hartley was a good sport - everyone in pony racing is very friendly and

we all keep in touch through Facebook, through the Pony Racing GB page. We also check the national website [pointtopoint.co.uk] which carries entries."

During the summer Sarah tried her hand on the Arab racing circuit and is now set for point-to-pointing - she has been riding out for Winchester trainer Chris Gordon for several years, and through him has acquired Owner Occupier, a winning chaser who turns nine in the New Year. Her father, Stephen, who on her website is described as 'Driver and Bank', may well have been involved in the transition.

Sarah, who has landed sponsorship through the Riders' Sponsorship Scheme with financial specialists Smith & Williamson, hopes to make her debut in points in January, and then take part in ladies' races on the Flat next summer. She says: "I'm realistic about what I can achieve in racing. I might not have the talent and I haven't got the horse power to make it to the top, but I can enjoy competing and winning races."



RaceTech keeps the future in mind



RaceTech's invaluable sponsorship of a series of point-to-point pony races remains a cornerstone of the sport.

The company backs three championships - for 138cm (13.2hh) and 148cm (14.2hh) ponies, and one for novice riders - because, says business development consultant Catherine Pullan: "We want to encourage young people to become aware of and take an interest in horse racing.

"RaceTech is a vital element of the industry, yet most of our takes place behind the scenes - sponsoring point-to-point pony racing is a good way for us to be seen by a wider audience."

Based in south west London, the company appointed a new chairman, Maggie Carver, when Tim Curtis stepped down in the summer. Carver, who has given her blessing to the continued backing of pony racing, is also chairman of ITN, the news gathering service, and is a former director of SiS (1991-2008), Channel 5, and Sporting Index.

Owned by the Racecourse Association, RaceTech provides technical services to horse racing - from cameras and broadcast services to maintaining the digital library of every UK horse race. It also organises public address and audio systems, photo finish technology and starting stalls.

At Cheltenham's October meeting the company entertained Lorcan Williams (138cm champion), Tina Smith (148cm), Sarak Kelk (novice rider) and their families and prizes were presented.



RaceTech chairman Maggie Carver (front, left) standing next to champions Lorcan Williams, Sarah Kelk and Tina Smith, when they and their families were entertained at Cheltenham's October meeting

©Gavin James GJ Multimedia

MATINGS, FOALINGS, CELEBRATIONS, GONE TO GROUND

Mike Trickey

West Country racing lost a respected figure in July with the passing of point-to-point trainer and Taunton clerk of the course **Mike Trickey** at the age of 70.

Trickey rode in point-to-points and also evented from his teenage years until he was 44. He subsequently stewarded or clerked at all the West Country's licensed tracks.

Sympathies to his widow Clare and family.



New Arrival

Northamptonshire-based Jimmy and Ann Tarry are expecting a baby, but East Anglians Andrew and Lauren Braithwaite are expecting three identical boys!

Sir John Gilmour

A passionate horseman, **Sir John Gilmour** built the course and ran the Fife point-to-point which was held on his land annually at Balcormo Mains.

A member of the Jockey Club and director of Perth Racecourse, he was Master of the Fife for 30 seasons and held several influential posts in point-to-pointing, including first president of the PPSA, chairman of the Northern Point-to-Point Association, and the MFHA's voice on forerunners to the PPA Board.

He rode 26 winners in points, and in 1975 won the Grimthorpe Gold Cup on Falling Leaves, trained by his wife Valerie. Two years later he became secretary of the Fife point-to-point, a role he held until his death.

His eldest son Nicholas succeeded to the baronetcy.

Guy Luck

Sandhurst area stalwart **Guy Luck** passed away at the age of 68 in June.

Ever helpful, he joined Mark Davies and the late Philip Scouller in saving, albeit too briefly, Tweseldown racecourse from closure, and was a rock in the Garth & South Berks Hunt (now part of the Kimblewick). As a senior steward he excelled, being fair and pragmatic in his decisions.



www.sweetphotography.com

Walter Heys and W B 'Billy' Nicholson

With long-standing friends Walter Heys and W B 'Billy' Nicholson both celebrating 90th birthdays this year it was decided to name a race at the Holcombe Point-to-Point in their honour.

Staged in April at Whittington in Lancashire, the 'Celebration Men's Open Race' was an apt way of paying tribute to Heys and Nicholson, both local farmers and keen hunt followers whose various roles on the local pointing scene have included clerk of the course and clerk of the scales.

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Senior vice-chairman **Stephen Howlett**
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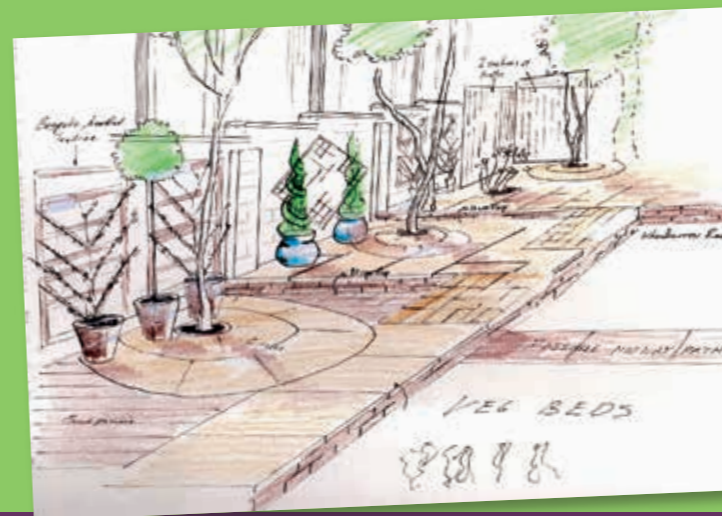
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No press officer was appointed in the North West and South East regions at the time of going to press.

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East Anglia

Multiple champion **James Owen** has retired from race riding at the age of 34, announcing his decision at the area's annual dinner. His first win, on Fill The Boot at Kimble in 1997, was a dead heat, and it was not until 12 months later that he recorded his initial outright victory on Blue Marlin at Garnons, with that year's Mackenzie & Selby annual noting, "looks like proving a useful amateur".

In 2003 he teamed up with legendary owner/trainer Joe Turner to land the first of nine area titles. With 131 successes between the flags, 14 under Rules, three on the Flat and numerous Arab racing victories, Owen's winning tally in the saddle was well over 200.

He now works as assistant trainer to John Ferguson, so is likely to be associated with many more winners in the years to come.

Welsh Borders

Rob Hodges may have hung up his racing boots after 16 years between the flags, but after attending October's seminar at Cheltenham is offering his services as steward at fixtures in this region. Rob, currently recovering from emergency surgery on his toe following an altercation with a lawn mower, commented that he's managed to sustain more injuries out of the saddle than in it.

Dick Pike, who has been the highly efficient PPSA Area Secretary for three decades, is handing over the reins to Liz Morgan. He will still be officiating at Welsh Border fixtures, whenever asked, and doubtless helping with course preparation at Garnons. Pike has been a key figure in every sense in the Welsh Border country, having ridden his own horses between the flags when he was well into his sixties.

Roger Tydeman has retired as secretary of the United Pack point-to-point committee, having been persuaded by clerk-of-the-course Wayne Tuffin to take the less demanding role of chairman. Lucy Macfarlane steps into Roger's shoes.

John Bebbington, who rode many winners between the flags, and whose family have been heavily involved in National Hunt racing, will be missed following his recent death after an illness.

South Midlands

A new fixture takes place on Grand National Day, Saturday April 5, at Mollington in Oxfordshire.

The **North Warwickshire Hunt Club** hosts the meeting which will be run by the Warwickshire Hunt Committee, with Ken Hutsby as clerk of the course and Iona Barnett as secretary.

Races are being timed to run around the Grand National and a big screen will be in place.

North West

Tabley's Knutsford Club Races meeting on Sunday, May 18, will be the most valuable of the season.

The card will include a new £1,500 area classic point-to-point to be known as The Lord Daresbury North West Classic Final, plus the £1,000 final of the Dodson & Horrell Novice Riders' Series, a £500 mixed open and a race for novice horses that were maidens at the season's outset.

'The Daresbury' replaces the area hunters' chase that used to be held at Bangor – it is restricted to North West-qualified horses and riders that have been placed in the first three

at any meeting in the region in the preceding 12 months. Well-known local owner Derek Malam is sponsoring the race, which offers £1,000 to the winner.

The D&H final has been opened up the first four placed horses and riders in any D&H qualifier, or the first three in any other race with novice riders' conditions.

Having been forced to abandon meetings in each of the past two years, and with a late Easter and risk of firm ground in 2014, the **High Peak Harriers** have reluctantly decided not to hold their annual Flagg Moor fixture.

Despite the loss of Flagg there will be three Easter meetings in the area, with the **Vale of Lune** and the **North Staffs** both on their traditional Easter Saturday dates and the **North Shropshire's** meeting at Eyton on Severn on Easter Monday. Those who like Bank Holiday racing will also be able to attend the **South Shropshire** fixture at Eyton on the first May Bank Holiday Monday.

The **Holcombe Hunt** has committed to racing again at Whittington on Sunday, March 23, but will run as a club meeting.

Yorkshire

Wayne Burnell is working with Sarah Stebbing this year as area secretary before taking over the role outright in 2014/15.

The Smith Family are giving a trophy for the area's leading horse in memory of point-to-point trainer **Elaine Smith**, who sadly lost her battle with cancer in June last year. Her son, Richard, was the area's senior men's champion last season.

The 2012/13 season showed the prowess of Yorkshire's women riders. **Jacqueline Coward** was national senior champion, while **Emma Todd** was second in the national novices' title. Regretfully the **Old Raby** meeting will not be held this season, but fears the **Staintondale** would not run proved unfounded. It will be held on Easter Monday at Sheriff Hutton – creating a second fixture at the venue for the first time in its short history – in aid of Jack Berry House, the Injured Jockeys' Fund's second rehabilitation centre.

Devon & Cornwall

A new website dedicated to point-to-point racing in the region has been launched – check out www.p2phorseraces-dc.com.

The **Dulverton West** meeting, held at Bratton Down near Barnstaple, revived a mixed open race over four miles and a furlong last season and had such a good response it will do so again in 2014. Sponsored by Brend's Hotel and worth £500, it will be held on Sunday, May 18, when pony racing will kick off the day's action at 11.45am.

Northern

Racing at Balcormo Mains, Britain's most northerly venue, goes ahead with increased prize money at the annual Fife Hunt meeting on Sunday, April 26.

The death last season of landowner/secretary John Gilmour was a blow, especially after a couple of weather-affected meetings, but a new committee in conjunction with the landowners has ensured the fixture's future.

Further details and course photographs at www.fifefoxhounds.org.

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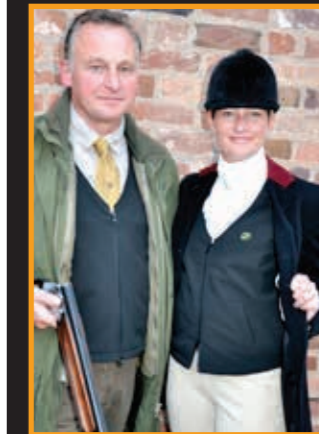


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- 16th March - South Herefordshire, Garnons
- 29th March - Monmouthshire, Llanvapley
- 5th April - North Warwickshire Club, Mollington
- 6th April - West Wales Club, Lydstep
- 12th April - West Somerset Vale, Cothelstone



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