

the Weekend card



The Sleeper Section

Marten Julian

Horses that have been added to the Sleeper Section this week are highlighted in blue.

Albert's Back (3yr Bay Gelding) L 25/1, L 12/1

It's been a long wait to see Albert's Back returned to the fray and, in all truth, it proved a singularly underwhelming experience. The son of Champs Elysees reappeared for the first time since June in a 1m 4f Class 4 0-85 handicap at Ripon last weekend and after showing up for a mile or so dropped back to finish last, beaten just over 16 lengths by the winner. He displayed all the indications of a horse that needed the race. A subsequent 3lb drop, from 73 to 70, will help as should a step back up to a mile and three-quarters. His trainer would not have brought him back this late in the season unless he had plans, so let's keep the faith for a while longer.

Al Mustashar (2yr Bay Colt) L 10/11

This son of Shamardal was heavily supported to make a winning debut at Thirsk but he missed the break and then found less than expected in the closing stages. He is rated much better than this run would suggest so let's keep a close eye on him if he takes up either of his engagements at *Goodwood on Sunday (3.45)* or *Yarmouth on Monday (2.10)*.

Entered at Goodwood on Sunday (3.45) and Yarmouth on Monday (2.10)

Alwasmiya (2yr Bay Filly) L 11/8, WON 11/4

My concerns about the six-furlong trip stretching Alwasmiya's stamina proved unfounded when she stayed on well to win a competitive little maiden over that trip at Nottingham today (Wednesday). The daughter of Kyllachy had shown plenty of ability at home and I expect she will now be put away for the winter. The presence of a 78-rated rival two and a half lengths back in fourth suggests she will be heading for a mark in the mid-80s. I expect her to prove a few pounds superior to that, with black type a serious possibility.

Bakht Khan (2yr Chestnut Colt) L 8/1, 3rd 11/2, L 6/1

The son of Sepoy did too much too soon on his latest start at Kempton, not helped by running free from a wide draw. He will now qualify for a handicap mark, which should prove workable next season in sprint handicaps. He should not be judged on this latest effort.

Chiara Luna (2yr Brown Filly) WON 4/5

Dermot Weld is very pleased with his batch of two-year-olds and this daughter of War Front has always been high in his pecking order. She is the first foal of Group 2 middle-distance winner Princess Highway, a half-sister to top stayer Royal Diamond and Group 3 winner Mad About You. She lived up to market expectations when landing some big bets on her debut in a 6f maiden at Leopardstown. I doubt we'll be seeing her now this autumn but I expect to be writing plenty about her in the Dark Horses for next season.

Eyecatcher (2yr Bay Colt) L 6/4

I'm not quite sure what to make of Eyecatcher's run at Pontefract on Monday. The son of Camelot had shaped with great promise on his previous start at Kempton and there were grounds for thinking, from his pedigree, that he would stay the mile and a quarter trip. However he did rather too much early in the race and then finished tamely in the closing stages, dropping back to fourth. Graham Lee was not hard on him close home and with the winner rated on 79, and the third on 70, Eyecatcher looks as if he will be heading for a mark in the mid-60s. I would have him high on my list of horses to follow from that sort of mark next season, especially given that he runs in the colours of Michael Tabor's wife.

Final Rock (3yr Bay Gelding) L 100/1

Final Rock is an imposing looking colt, with a tremendous physique and the scope to progress. Sir Mark Prescott gave him a fourth run, just a week after his third, to force the handicapper into giving the horse a mark. The tactic worked, because Final Rock has been given a rating of 50, which is about right on form but around 10lb lower than I expected.

Final Rock would not still be in this yard if a rating of 50 were a true measure of his ability. I note that he is entered for the Newmarket Horses In Training Sale on 31 October. If he misses that engagement and remains in training next season then he would be one to take very seriously from this mark,

G Eye Joe (2yr Chestnut Colt) L 9/2

James Given's son of Lethal Force showed early pace on his debut at Ascot before dropping away to finish last of seven. He will have come on appreciably for that run and should be a different proposition next time out.

Just Brilliant (2yr Bay Colt) WON 0/30

I was pleased to see this son of Lope De Vega make a winning debut for Peter Chapple-Hyam at Newmarket last weekend. The colt battled on well after being headed in a way suggesting trips beyond this mile will suit him next year. Before then he may take his chance in the Racing Post Trophy at Doncaster, the race his half-brother Marcel won in 2015.

King Crimson (5yr Chestnut Gelding)

When I was working as Mick Channon's private handicapper they hoped that King Crimson would become their Royal Ascot two-year-old. He fell way short of that level, winning on his sixth and seventh starts at Bath and Carlisle and ending his juvenile year on a mark of 78. Since then he has won off 68, 71, 78, 79 and 80 but last autumn he moved from West Ilsley to join John Butler at Newmarket. In nine subsequent starts he has beaten just 10 horses home, dropping from a mark of 82 in October to 65. Those nine starts all came on the all-weather, but King Crimson has won most of his races on the turf, three times at Brighton. Keep your eyes peeled for King Crimson at a sharp track fairly soon. I am sure he retains his ability.

Lever Park (2yr Bay Filly)

Bryan Smart has handled some very speedy two-year-olds in his time and this daughter of Camacho has been showing him plenty of pace in her early work. She looks well bought at 52,000gns as a two-year-old as she is a half-sister to Group 3 winner Tax Free, the speedy Inexile, Green Beret and other useful types. Her pedigree is all about speed.

Magellan (3yr Bay Colt)

Magellan proved yet another winner for this feature when battling on gamely to land an extended 1m 4f maiden at Newcastle on Monday. I said on my line beforehand that it was significant that he was Roger Charlton's only traveller on the long trip from Beckhampton, and this victory is sure to make him an attractive prospect if he keeps his appointment in the Horses In Training Sale at Newmarket at the end of this month. Standing over 17 hands, he is the biggest horse the trainer has ever had at Beckhampton.

Pitch Dark (2yr Bay Colt)

This son of Dubawi is a half-brother to top US performer Zhukova out of Irish 1,000 Guineas winner Nighttime, so it comes as no real surprise that he went through the ring for E1,100,000 as a foal. The colt has shaped nicely in early limbering work and will make an impression in a back-end maiden.

Play Mate (2yr Bay Filly)

This daughter of Showcasing has shown Karl Burke a fair measure of ability in her work at home. She is a half-sister to four winners all at up to a mile out of a daughter of Cadeaux Genereux. Respect her when she appears.

Riverside Walk (2yr Bay Filly)

Keith Dalgleish does not get many useful two-year-olds but he thinks the world of this daughter of Showcasing, who is out of a middle-distance winning daughter of a half-sister to 1m 4f Group 3 winner Gower Song and the family of Park Hill Stakes winner Idle Waters. This is one of my favourite families in the stud book, and this filly is bred to stay seven furlongs or a mile.

Shamlan (5yr Brown Gelding) L 6/1

I get the impression that Shamlan was not fancied, despite market support, when down the field last time at Chelmsford. He was never travelling well at any stage but I am surprised that he has not dropped a pound or two in the ratings as a result. I want us to stay with him and I am convinced that there will be a big day for him.

Selections

Al Mustashar (3.45 Goodwood Sunday and 2.10 Yarmouth Monday)

The Premier List Update

Marten Julian

Here are the dozen Premier List horses from my 2017 edition of the Dark Horses Annual. I advise a level stake on these horses when they run so for that reason when they appear they will qualify as selections. I will pass on my Premier List from the Dark Horses Jumps Guide in the next week or two.

Chessman, Coronet, Crystal Ocean, Dal Harraild, Make Time, Mirage Dancer, Pivoine, Poet's Word, Red Label, Richie McCaw, Temple Church, Zainhom

Chessman: Shaped well in the Jersey Stakes, making good headway from halfway on the unfavoured side of the course. His mark has risen 4lb from 93 to 97. He has no big-race entries at this stage.

Coronet: May run next in the Qipco British Champions Fillies & Mares Stakes at Ascot on Saturday, 21 October. I would not be surprised to see her kept in training as a four-year-old as she is on the cusp of landing a Group 1 race.

Crystal Ocean: Unlikely to run again this season but promises to prove a Group 1 performer over a mile and a half next season. We have still to see the best of him, and he could not be in better hands to realise his great potential.

Dal Harraild: Shaped well in the Hardwicke Stakes to come sixth, finishing close behind horses rated up to 7lb superior, but then ran rather flat in the Lonsdale Cup at York over an extended two miles. He was slightly squeezed for room and the ground may not have been as fast as he prefers. It wasn't a bad effort at the weights and so I suggest we stay with him, especially if he has a chance at some point to race on genuinely quick ground. He has an entry for the Qipco Long Distance Cup at Ascot on 21 October and the Melbourne Cup on 7 November.

Make Time: Ran well to chase home Beat The Bank at Goodwood, earning him a 4lb rise in the ratings from 103 to 107, but disappointed at York when stepped up in trip to nine furlongs. He is bred to stay a mile and a quarter.

Mirage Dancer: Didn't surprise me with his disappointing race at Doncaster. I think the key to Mirage Dancer will be a strongly-run race on fast ground over a mile and a quarter. I expect him to stay in training next season and it may not be until then that he encounters such conditions.

Pivoine: Won a 1m 3f 0-85, visored for the first time, at Kempton and followed up in good style in an extended 1m 2f 0-85 Classified Stakes at Doncaster, keeping on well to beat the strong-finishing Lawless Secret. A 7lb rise now leaves him on a mark of 90 but he is bred to stay further and can continue to progress now the message appears to have got through. As a gelding he will be around for a while longer, although in common with Ballymacoll's other stock he will be destined for the dispersal sale later this autumn. I imagine he could attract the attention of the jumping trainers, especially those holding a dual licence. He is entered for an extended *1m 2f 0-90 handicap at York on Saturday (5.30)*. I expect him to go close again.

Poet's Word: Poet's Word has to be respected if he runs in the Qipco Champion Stakes at Ascot on 21 October. I would sooner see him running over a mile and a half, but he will have his main targets over that trip next season, with the Dubai World Cup at Meydan over a mile and a quarter an early challenge.

Richie McCaw: Richie McCaw is one of the few disappointing horses that Ian Williams has at the moment and, once again, the horse stopped to nothing in the closing stages last time out in a 1m 4f handicap at York, dropping away to finish 17 and a half lengths behind the winner. Perhaps he didn't stay the trip, even though his pedigree suggests he should have done, but the handicapper has not dropped him and he runs to me like a

horse with a problem, perhaps of a respiratory nature. Let's stay loyal for a while longer in the hope that his talented handler finds the key to him.

Temple Church: This son of Lawman may have found the ground a shade too quick for him at Newbury. I didn't much care for the way he finished his race, and the first-time application of the tongue-tie may indicate that he has a respiratory problem, or something along those lines. A 2lb drop, from 97 to 95, will help and I would suggest we keep him on our side for a return to softer ground.

Zainhom: Ran last in a Group 3 at Goodwood, possibly not handling the soft ground even though he won his maiden on good to soft ground last season. He is probably not quite Group class and his mark has dropped from 106 to 102.

Selections

Pivoine (5.30 York Saturday)

The Ante-Post Agenda

Marten Julian

Last week I brought your attention to **Sacred Life** following his mighty impressive six lengths defeat of Alba Power in the Prix Thomas Bryon. I read that the last three furlongs were each run in sub-12 second splits, suggesting this was every bit as impressive as it looked to the eye.

The plan is now for him to return to Saint-Cloud for the Group 1 Criterium International. Trainer Stephane Wattel has not made any mention of long-term plans beyond that race, but I see that Bet 365 have opened up with a price of 33/1 for next year's 2,000 Guineas. William Hill are the only other firm, offering just 14/1.

The ground was very soft at Saint-Cloud, which may lead connections to keep him in France next spring, but I have decided to take a little of the 33/1 as a speculative interest bet. You may feel tempted to do the same, provided you are happy to risk his not running.

Sacred Life 33/1 (2,000 Guineas)

Under The Radar

Marten Julian

I am the first to concede that I can get a bee in my bonnet about a horse, and Accidental Agent is just one example of the virtue of staying loyal, but I really think we have to let go now of **Adarena**.

I will never forget the afternoon at Cartmel in July when I saw her pass the post full of running having been hopelessly out of touch a mile from home. However she is quite clearly very limited, with issues to boot, and since then she has suffered four heavy defeats – including two last weekend at Fontwell.

She is now down to a chase mark of 92, from 99, but that won't make any difference given her current form. I suspect she will now be rested until the spring, when it would not surprise me to see her back racing as a fresh mare at Cartmel's first meeting in May.

The Plan Man has an entry for a *1m 4f handicap on the Flat at Dundalk on Friday (8.00)*. This is the sort of race he could win so watch for market support as an indication of stable expectations. I remain convinced that he has the ability to win races, both on the Flat and over the jumps.

Lucky Ellen made her UK debut at Beverley over an extended mile in a classified stakes race. Given the stamina on her dam's side I thought the trip could be on the sharp side and that is how she ran, outpaced at the start and then staying on steadily through tiring horses to finish third. She had shown a modicum of ability in four runs in Ireland, twice on the all-weather at Dundalk.

Lucky Ellen is owned by someone who likes a bet, so watch for her if she runs next time in a handicap. Her mark has dropped from 51 to 50 following her last run.

Selections

The Plan Man (8.00 Dundalk Friday)

The Clock Watcher

Marten Julian

I have nothing for this section this weekend.

The Weekend Action

Marten Julian

There are four previously noted horses entered over the next few days.

Of these the most interesting is **Quixote**, who is declared for a *1m 0-100 at York on Friday (2.45)*. The seven-year-old may still be a little high from a mark of 93 but he has a decent race in him and I'll not be letting him run unsupported at 40/1.

Bravery is also declared for this race and also has an entry for the Balmoral Handicap on Ascot's big day on Saturday week. He is down 2lb from his Cambridgeshire mark, where he stayed on late. This mile may be on the sharp side for him these days.

Bolder Bob should go close on *Friday at York (3.55)*. David Barron's progressive young stayer followed up his win at Leicester off 69 with a comfortable victory at Beverley off 77. Now rated on 84, he is bred to relish the step up from a mile and a half to 1m 6f and the ease in the ground will suit him.

There are plenty of in-form horses declared against him but at around 12/1 in the early betting he is sound each-way value.

Awake My Soul has a 3lb rise from his win last time at Haydock (*5.30 York Saturday*). This looks tough for him.

I'll be at Newmarket, chiefly to see the two-year-olds running in the Group races.

I am not surprised to see the market support for Emaraaty in the Dewhurst (*3.00 Saturday*). The son of Dubawi fulfilled the promise shown on his Sandown debut when comfortably making all to win a Newbury maiden. The problem I have with that form is the proximity in second of the 79-rated Magnificent, who was coming into the race a thrice-raced maiden. The time of the race was also fairly ordinary, so the winner rates with a mark in the mid to high-80s.

The favourite Expert Eye is already rated on 118, with a top speed figure at Goodwood to his name. Also it is a long-time, if ever, that I have heard Sir Michael Stoute talk so positively about a two-year-old in his care.

Verbal Dexterity is rated on 117, just 1lb behind Expert Eye. He beat reliable yardstick Beckford by three and a half lengths in the Group 1 National Stakes, battling on gamely after being ridden throughout the last quarter mile. As you would expect from a horse

trained by Jim Bolger he is exceptionally tough. He never looked to be travelling that well at the Curragh and you would not have expected the winning margin to be so large a quarter of a mile from home.

In my view this is a strong Dewhurst, with a high marker set by the two market leaders.

Have a little each-way on **Dubawi Fifty** in the *Cesarewitch* (3.40). The four-year-old has been brought along quietly with this race in mind and he comes here fresher than most, this being just his third run of the season.

Trainer Karen McLintock took him to Newcastle for a gallop the other day and my news is that he could not be in better form. A rise of 11lb for his two wins this season is not harsh and 8st 11lb is a handy racing weight.

My concern is that Silvestre De Sousa was originally booked for the ride but he appears to have jumped ship to ride **Withhold** for Roger Charlton. The son of Champs Elysees has run just once this season and once for this trainer, finishing third over 1m 4f at Newbury in September. Owned by Tony Bloom, a man who likes a bet, I fear him. Early-comers had 33/1 about the horse last month and I suspect the owner is on. He is bred to stay and I have to make him the saver.

Selections

Quixote (2.45 York Friday), Bolder Bob EW (3.55 York Friday), Dubawi Fifty and Withhold (3.40 Newmarket Saturday)

The Weekend Selections Retrospective Marten Julian

This piece is devoted to retrospective analysis of last week's selections. If any of the horses that are featured in this section are entered and deemed worthy of selection then they will be found in my Weekend Action feature.

Accidental Agent delighted me with his performance at Ascot on Saturday.

I had serious concerns beforehand that a 12lb rise for his neck second in a Listed race a fortnight earlier, together with uncertainty about his ability to act on the good to soft ground, could be his undoing. However my long-held belief that you stay loyal to 'old friends' paid off and the three-year-old has been raised another 5lb, from 104 to 109.

He carries an entry for the valuable Balmoral Handicap a week on Saturday, where a 6lb penalty would actually leave him 11lb worse in than his new mark. However such is his form at the moment that I expect he will be allowed to take his chance given that this comes at the end of the season.

It seems a long while ago that I first saw this colt on his debut at an Sandown evening meeting in July, 2016. I remember walking back from the track to my base with the image of him walking round the paddock dominating my mind. Still lightly-raced, with just nine runs to his name, Group races will be on the agenda next season assuming, of course, that he is not sold.

Commander Han is one of the laziest two-year-old I have seen for a long time. The son of Siyouni took ages to find his stride on his York debut and he seemed, if anything, to take even longer when dropped in grade last time at Redcar. He clearly takes more after his maternal grandsire Shirocco than his sire, but the ability is there for sure and he may land a 1m maiden in the closing weeks of the season.

If not then middle-distance handicaps will be his main area of interest next season.

Wisty was put in his place when stepped up in grade last Sunday at Kelso. He was never

able to obtain an uncontested lead and it was clear from an early stage that he was not enjoying life. I am not sure where he can go from here on. After a busy summer he would probably benefit from a winter break, especially given that he would be unsuited to heavy ground. I'm dropping him from our list for the time being.

Dalileo shaped better than on his debut when running Deyaarna to a couple of lengths at Chelmsford last Thursday. The winner has been allotted a mark of 89, which suggests Dalileo ran to something in the low 80s. He could prove effective from that mark in handicaps next season, so let's hope he doesn't compromise his potential rating next time out.

Eldritch runs at Kempton later this evening (Wednesday). I will report back on his performance next week.

Previously Noted Horses

Abjar, Accidental Agent, Adamant, Awake My Soul, Ayutthaya, Bolder Bob, Bravery, Caius Marcius, Coronet, Crystal Ocean, Dalileo, Eldritch, Finisher, Fleetfoot Jack, Giant's Treasure, GM Hopkins, King's Slipper, Mori, Peterport, Poet's Word, Quixote, Soliloquy, Stubbytuesday, Tocco D'Amore

The Irish Angle Stuart Williams

I am pleased to introduce you to Stuart Williams. I have been impressed with his work so I invited him to contribute to the Weekend Card. Here he tells us a few things about himself.

A man for all things National Hunt, therefore it's a great thrill to be invited by Marten to pen regular pieces regarding Irish jump racing - a task that I will tackle with great relish and gusto.

I began writing about racing to promote a 'Ten to Follow' competition that I ran with a good friend two years ago, and I am pleased to say that it has opened up doors I could never have previously imagined. Having received hugely encouraging support from regular readers of my blog, mainly through Twitter, it's a great honour to be given the opportunity to write alongside such a longstanding and highly-respected figure as Marten Julian, as well as others who contribute to the Dark Horses brand.

A staunch National Hunt enthusiast since 2011, my first ever ante-post bet was £5 on Hurricane Fly at 9/2 for the 2011 Champion Hurdle and, quite simply, I've been hooked ever since! A member at Cheltenham racecourse, I also regularly frequent my local track Uttoxeter when work permits. And, like many ardent racing enthusiasts, I harbour ambitions of visiting every track on both sides of the Irish Sea before I leave this mortal realm. Thankfully at the age of 26 time is on my side!

Hopefully you will find my work informative, enjoyable and, if I am very lucky, profitable to follow. A keen form student, I love nothing more than flicking through the form book with the aim of cracking a tricky handicap conundrum. Some may say I'm a glutton for punishment. However, I've always been a firm believer in the theory that if you put in the hard work, over the fullness of time you will receive your just desserts.

That, at least, is the dream. Good luck!

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I am delighted to have been asked by Marten to pen regular pieces concerning Irish jumps racing this winter. And judging by the plethora of potential-packed youngsters

currently plying their trade in the Emerald Isle, there has perhaps never been a better time to do so.

Already we have witnessed the fabulous Champion Bumper winner Fayonagh make a faultless hurdling bow at Fairyhouse, which came just days after the highly-regarded Death Duty made a successful start to life over fences. And when you factor in that we have still got the likes of Getabird, Red Jack and Samcro to come over timber - and Bacardys, Monalee and Petit Mouchoir to look forward to over fences, it really gets the juices flowing ahead of a what promises to be yet another hugely enthralling National Hunt campaign.

Champion Chase winner Special Tiara, Stayers' Hurdle hero Nichols Canyon and reigning Gold Cup hero Sizing John, who all played starring roles at a blockbuster Cheltenham Festival for the Irish contingent last term (19 Irish trained winners from 28 races), further demonstrate the rude health of Irish jumping at present. As do breathtaking Irish Grand National winner Our Duke, dual Cheltenham Festival scorer Yorkhill and the hopefully fully recovered Douvan - all names that send shivers down the spine of any ardent National Hunt enthusiast.

However those who have come across my work in the past will already be aware that I enjoy highlighting those horses who slip 'under the radar', a policy that can yield rich dividends in Ireland if you are prepared to look beyond the fancy names and big price tags of inmates from both Closutton and Cullentra stables.

Indeed value is important to me when considering potential betting propositions, highlighted by my putting forward both Labaik (50/1) and Tully East (20/1 ante-post & 16/1 on the day) as selections on day one of the Cheltenham Festival earlier this year. Needless to say it is not always the biggest names who prevail.

Already I've identified many talented youngsters that I am keen to keep on side this winter. The well-bred Mortal, by King's Theatre out of smart racemare Pomme Tiepy, Stowaway Forever, who ran a promising race on his hurdling debut at Galway on Tuesday and should benefit for both the experience and extra yardage in time, and Wonderoftheworld, who disappointed when dropped in trip at Limerick last Sunday but could easily bounce back when returned to three miles, are just three names that readily spring to mind.

Of last season's point-to-point graduates Gallahers Cross, Heroesandvillains and Minella Times are three exciting types who could potentially be value when encountering Gordon Elliott and Willie Mullins trained contenders on the track this season.

The former, who won a Punchestown Point-to-Point in taking fashion when in the care of Sandra Hughes, will be trained by Peter Fahey this term. Peter has proved himself a very shrewd handler when armed with the right ammunition and Gallahers Cross is most definitely a name for the notebooks.

A quick glance at the fixture list reveals a relatively quiet weekend when it comes to jumping, with seven-race cards at Downpatrick on Friday and Cork on Sunday the only Irish offerings.

Chesterfield King (*2.15 Downpatrick Friday*) is an eye-catching entry in the opening maiden hurdle at Downpatrick, hailing from the in-form stable of J.P. Dempsey. Race fit following a fine second-placed effort behind a promising type in the care of Gordon Elliott last month (23 lengths clear of the third), he could represent value against the likely Willie Mullins trained favourite, Sympa Des Flos.

Persian Wind (*4.00 Downpatrick Friday*) would also be of interest for Dempsey later on the card, having finished second over course and distance in August. Clearly thriving at present with form figures of 2021 (both second placed efforts achieved at Downpatrick) since returning from a 10-months' absence, he should go well once again.

Whilst Sunday's fixture at Cork may not exactly set the pulse racing, there is an interesting contender lurking in the 2m3f handicap hurdle on the card, namely Hollow Tree (5.00 Cork Sunday).

It may seem ludicrous to take an interest in a horse who hasn't won a race since December 2011 - remarkably a Grade 1 contest - but the fact that Gordon Elliott has now taken over the training of Hollow Tree is intriguing to say the least, and it's common knowledge that the master of Cullenta stables has a knack of rejuvenating horses and targeting winnable races. He warrants a market check.

Whilst I will be focussing on Irish racing in this publication, I would like to give a strong mention to a horse running at Chepstow on Sunday, as I believe he holds very sound claims in the Grade 2 Persian War Novices' Hurdle.

Poetic Rhythm (3.25 Chepstow Sunday) won a Listed bumper for burgeoning Cotswolds based trainer Fergal O'Brien on this card last year, and returns to the scene of his victory having boasted some very solid form in competitive novice hurdles last term, which includes finishing behind subsequent Aintree Grade 1 winner Pingshou and dual Prestbury Park Grade 2 scorer Wholestone.

The yard like to get a few winners on the board early doors, and it's quite possible that this race has been a target for Poetic Rhythm for some time. A strongly-run contest could prove ideal for the smooth travelling six-year-old, who appeared to relish the long Chepstow run-in 12 months ago. He looks sure to go well in the hands of Paddy Brennan.

Selections

Chesterfield King (2.15 Downpatrick Friday), Persian Wind (4.00 Downpatrick Friday), Hollow Tree (5.00 Cork Sunday), Poetic Rhythm (3.25 Chepstow Sunday)

Jodie's Jottings

Jodie Standing

It was a welcome relief last week to finally get back on the scoreboard.

I had almost given up the ghost with Shady McCoy, but when Ryan Moore's name is chalked up alongside a horse at an advanced stage, you have to sit up and take note. He has an entry at York on Friday (5.35) but he may be in the handicapper's grip once again following a 5lb rise.

Bigirononhiship was pinpoint accurate over his fences and displayed a game attitude to regain the lead once headed on the run-in. I believe there is a decent pot to be landed with him this season and the handicapper has only put him up 2lb to 124.

Shelbe stayed on well having not been given the best of chances. He had to come widest of all in the home straight having raced on the rail for most of the contest.

On Saturday Diable De Sivola was weak in the market and drifted from 3/1 in the morning to 13/2. I got the impression from the drift and by how the horse was ridden that connections have bigger targets in mind for the four-year-old. I imagine he'll be ridden with more vigour in a valuable handicap next time.

Point-to-point recruit Court Liability was as green as grass throughout his race but displayed a very good attitude to outbattle his rivals in the dying strides. He's a nice type, but bumpers are not his game. He needs a trip over obstacles.

This weekend there is top quality action all over the place.

Firstly, I want to draw attention to a couple of my point-to-pointers which are due to run on Thursday.

Good Man Pat (2.45 Exeter Thursday) won his point by 12 lengths at the second time of asking having pulled up on his first start after being sent off the well-backed evens favourite. He demonstrated a fine turn of foot on his route to victory and beat decent opposition in the process including Ballymoy, who has since run with great credit on his first start for Nigel Twiston-Davies a couple of weeks ago.

Alan King won a similar event at the weekend with a point-to-point graduate and I am hoping Good Man Pat can do the same.

Another to graduate from between the flags is **Global Citizen** (2.55 Worcester Thursday).

I was very impressed with this gelding's debut at Bellurgan Park in April, so much so that he is on my 'Five To Follow' from the 40 recruits I wrote about. He looked distinctly above average as he cruised effortlessly through the race, jumping with professionalism and accuracy.

He appeared to possess a fine blend of speed and stamina which should stand him in good stead competing in bumpers. He's a full brother to the talented A Hare Breath and he's also a half-brother to De Plotting Shed.

His previous handler William Murphy looked after De Plotting Shed and Annacotty but described this gelding as "an aeroplane" and at this stage in his career is in a different class to anything he's had before.

Win, lose or draw here, he is one to follow throughout the season.

On Friday, Michael Appleby could send Big Country to Ireland to compete in a Listed contest at Dundalk (8.30). I've been a big fan of the High Chaparrel gelding this summer and it's interesting that the trainer has sighted an opportunity there. He is also entered at York on Saturday. I was slightly disappointed with his effort in the Cambridgeshire so I am happy to watch him this time.

Another of the trainer's horses I have been keen on is Kickboxer. He holds an entry at York on Saturday (3.15) and I will be watching with a keen eye to see if he can regather his form after failing to cope with the ground conditions at Haydock in the rearranged Ayr Gold Cup. This looks a slightly less competitive assignment, but as with Big Country, I am happy to watch on.

Down at Chepstow the jumps action is cranked up a gear. For me this is the curtain raiser for the jumps season proper, and there are a whole host of names on the advanced card that get the appetite going.

The novices' chase on Saturday (3.05) has the potential to be a top-class renewal and looks certain to be a race that will be looked back upon over the course of the coming months.

Finian's Oscar is obviously the standout name on the card, but Topofthegame is a horse I intend to follow throughout this season as I believe he will excel over the larger obstacles with time. This looks a good starting point for him.

My first selection on Saturday is Charlie Longsdon's **Coologue** (4.45 Chepstow Saturday).

The eight-year-old reached a career high mark of 148 last season following a gutsy victory at Cheltenham on his seasonal debut from a mark of 140. He is back down to that mark having struggled on a couple of occasion since, but the best time to catch the gelding is when he is fresh.

Charlie Longsdon usually has his horses very forward at this time of year and I am hoping the gelding is fit and ready to go on Saturday. He wouldn't want the ground too testing, but the galloping track should suit him.

On Sunday, I am sticking with the jumps action and am keen on the chances of **Oldgrangewood** if he lines up in the handicap hurdle (4.35 *Chepstow Sunday*).

The gelding enjoyed a fruitful novice chase campaign last season, but Dan Skelton could be reverting back to the smaller obstacles to exploit a very attractive handicap mark. The gelding is currently rated on 134, which is 13lb below his chase rating, and providing he shows the same amount of enthusiasm for the smaller hurdles as he does the larger ones, he should be the one to beat.

Finally, I want to be with Rules debutant **Drovers Lane** in the concluding bumper (5.40 *Chepstow Sunday* - time subject to change if the race splits into two divisions).

The son of Oscar is one of my pointers from last season, but we never saw him on a racecourse because he was a big, raw individual that required plenty of time to fill his frame. That's never a bad thing and I would much rather a trainer give their horses time to develop than push them too soon.

Rebecca Curtis, in a stable preview in March, reported that the gelding was coming along nicely and they were hopeful of winning a spring bumper with him. That obviously never materialised, but it's encouraging that they felt confident in him back then.

He showed a potent turn of foot when winning his point-to-point in impressive style and that should stand him in good stead here.

Going into next week, I would urge you to take a close look at **Brewin'upastrom** in the maiden hurdle at Huntingdon (5.20 *Huntingdon Tuesday*). He is another to feature in my point-to-point article following a very taking victory between the flags.

He hails from a family of winners, and he looked ultra-professional when quickening up smartly on route to an eight length victory, suggesting he'd be sharp enough to be competitive first time out once racing under Rules.

Dan Skelton and Ryan Mahon parted with £250,000 to bring the Milan gelding home from the Cheltenham sale in April and he could develop into a nice type.

Selections

Good Man Pat (2.45 Exeter Thursday), Global Citizen (2.55 Worcester Thursday), Coologue (4.45 Chepstow Saturday), Oldgrangewood (4.35 Chepstow Sunday), Drovers Lane (5.40 Chepstow Sunday) Brewin'upastrom (5.20 Huntingdon Tuesday)

The Weekend News

Ian Carnaby

Last weekend worked out well and it was a good time to be with Roger Charlton. Cribbs Causeway won readily at Newmarket, despite Frankie Dettori dropping his whip, while Projection is every bit as good as we thought and chased up Blue Point in a Group 3 at Ascot.

Cribbs Causeway is progressive over a mile and a half plus and Charlton may move her up to Listed class for a mile and five race at Lingfield. I have no strong thoughts on that and feel that we caught her on the right day.

Projection has been very unlucky indeed because the ground never came right for him after his placed effort in the Wokingham. Whilst there is no point in going on about

targets missed, I believe he would have won the Stewards' Cup on good ground or better but he had no chance on the wrong side in the soft.

Even last week it was good to soft but he ran a cracker and was catching Blue Point in the dying strides, although the winner showed terrific mid-race speed and will no doubt do so again. The trouble is, you have to go somewhere and after last week it will be difficult, if not impossible, for Projection to revert to valuable handicaps with a viable chance at the weights - not that there is much left anyway. As I say, it was just bad luck.

George William missed Redcar last week but won at Salisbury on Monday. He is very well at present and I should think Richard Hannon will find another race for him before the curtain falls. They have the knack of keeping horses fresh and keen right through a long campaign and George William had the bonus of a rest from midsummer onwards.

My only regret was not staying with a favourite mare, Pixeleen, when she went to Newmarket on Saturday. She had an impossible task at the weights in soft ground at Bath but ran her heart out in third and I thought that would do her for the season. But she is very game and rallied to win the Newmarket handicap at 12/1. Malcolm Saunders is one of the best trainers of sprinters I have known and just about everything in the yard goes in at some stage.

There would be nothing to lose if running Pixeleen again in the Listed Darley EBF Stallions Boadicea Stakes (*4.50 Newmarket Saturday*), although I think she would be flying rather high. Aidan O'Brien has many entries over the two days of the Cesarewitch meeting but settled for **Alphabet** in this and she may well be good enough.

Like just about everything else, Alphabet was blinded for pace by Battaash in the Prix de l'Abbaye and has since finished only sixth at Navan. However, on earlier running behind Quiet Reflection and stable-companion Caravaggio, she has an excellent chance in this company. O'Brien has shown in recent weeks that his fillies can withstand a busy schedule.

The other one I like on this card is last year's Cambridgeshire winner **Spark Plug** in the Group 3 Darley Club Stakes (*5.25 Newmarket Saturday*). He has not always had things go his way this term but remains lightly raced and Brian Meehan (not a trainer I often catch on the right day) has been in good form. Spark Plug stays ten furlongs but nine at a stiff track is perfect for him, as he showed last year. He needs the ground to keep drying out because Meehan has withdrawn him three times in softer conditions

There is always a danger in omitting horses which have run poorly once because they may suddenly reproduce the form which made you fancy them in the first place. As I wrote last week, I have no idea what Dark Red was doing at Chelmsford last time but James Doyle never had him in a challenging position at any stage and soon called it a day in the straight.

On one or two previous efforts, most notably his disqualification at Goodwood, **Dark Red** has a fair chance in the Download The Coral App Handicap (*2.05 York Saturday*) and has to be a price after a miserable effort like that. Very small stakes, needless to say.

The Coral Sprint Trophy Handicap (*3.15 York Saturday*) brings together many familiar faces. Just counting down the list of possibles, the consistent but luckless **Lexington Abbey** might need a few to drop out but Paul Cole's **Upstaging** is certain to get in and could give the trainer his biggest pot for quite some time. Upstaging has had a good campaign and trying to give Ice Age 7lb at Windsor last time was probably a very stiff task in the light of the latter's subsequent achievements. Upstaging was also placed in the Stewards' Cup and this contest looks ideal for him, as it does for Lexington Abbey, who has a chance if creeping into the handicap.

Back at Newmarket, I like early Qipco 2,000 Guineas favourite **Expert Eye** in the Group 1 Darley Dewhurst Stakes (3.00 Newmarket Saturday). It's the old problem, really. Either you worry about the setback and look on or you trust a world-class trainer like Sir Michael Stoute to have him spot-on. All I can say is that Expert Eye was hugely impressive at Goodwood and the form of both his races stands up extremely well. I go with Stoute.

Finally, Richard Fahey's **Home Cummins** is worth a few coins each-way in the unibet.co.uk Handicap (2.45 York Friday). The trainer does well for owner Mrs Steel, Home Cummins knows her way around the Knavesmire, is tough and consistent and should go very close once again.

Selections

Home Cummins each-way (2.45 York Friday), Expert Eye (3.00 Newmarket Saturday), Alphabet (4.50 Newmarket Saturday), Spark Plug (5.25 Newmarket Saturday), Dark Red (2.05 York Saturday), Upstaging and Lexington Abbey (3.15 York Saturday)



Marten Julian

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Selections

Thursday 12th October

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Good Man Pat | Jodie's Jottings | 2.45 Exeter |
| Global Citizen | Jodie's Jottings | 2.55 Worcester |

Friday 13th October

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Chesterfield King | The Irish Angle (Stuart Williams) | 2.15 Downpatrick |
| Home Cummins (each-way) | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 2.45 York |
| Quixote | Marten's Weekend Action | 2.45 York |
| Bolder Bob (each-way) | Marten's Weekend Action | 3.55 York |
| Persian Wind | The Irish Angle (Stuart Williams) | 4.00 Downpatrick |
| The Plan Man | Under The Radar (Marten) | 8.00 Dundalk |

Saturday 14th October

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Dark Red | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 2.05 York |
| Expert Eye | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 3.00 Newmarket |
| Upstaging | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 3.15 York |
| Lexington Abbey | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 3.15 York |
| Dubawi Fifty | Marten's Weekend Action | 3.40 Newmarket |
| Withhold | Marten's Weekend Action | 3.40 Newmarket |
| Coologue | Jodie's Jottings | 4.45 Chepstow |
| Alphabet | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 4.50 Newmarket |
| Spark Plug | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 5.25 Newmarket |
| Pivoine | The Premier List Update (Marten) | 5.30 York |

Sunday 15th October

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Poetic Rhythm | The Irish Angle (Stuart Williams) | 3.25 Chepstow |
| Al Mustashar* | The Sleeper Section (Marten) | 3.45 Goodwood |
| Oldgrangewood | Jodie's Jottings | 4.35 Chepstow |
| Hollow Tree | The Irish Angle (Stuart Williams) | 5.00 Cork |
| Drovers Lane** | Jodie's Jottings | 5.40 Chepstow |

Monday 16th October

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|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Al Mustashar* | The Sleeper Section (Marten) | 2.10 Yarmouth |
|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|

Tuesday 17th October

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|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Lexington Abbey* | Ian Carnaby's Weekend News | 3.30 Leicester |
| Brewin'upastorm | Jodie's Jottings | 5.20 Huntingdon |

The Ante Post Agenda

Sacred Life 33/1 (2,000 Guineas)

*This horse also has another entry.

** Time may alter if the race splits into two divisions.