

the Weekend Card



Marken Julian

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The Fixtures

THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER: Sedgefield, Newbury, Thurles,
Ludlow, Chelmsford

FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER: Down Royal, Fontwell, Exeter, Hexham,
Newcastle, Dundalk

SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER: Doncaster, Aintree, Kelso,
Wincanton, Down Royal, Chelmsford

SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER: Naas, Sandown, Cork, Ffos Las

MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER: Kempton, Carlisle & Wolverhampton

TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER: Huntingdon, Hereford Lingfield,
Chelmsford

Enhanced Odds and Concessions

Since the arrival of the Exchanges, notably Betfair, bookmakers have introduced a variety of concessions and benefits to backers, both on their Internet betting sites and in their high street shops. They offer a wide range of introductory enticements to new account applicants, some up to £50 – refer to Freebets.co.uk - while visitors to Betfred shops can opt for their Lucky 15/31/63 offer of twice the odds on a single winner on a Lucky 15, four times the odds on a single winner on a Lucky 31 and five times the odds on a single winner on a Lucky 63.

The major firms also give enhanced place options, sometimes extending to the first 10 in big fields at major meetings. A few firms offer you the chance to extend the place market at reduced odds, while Betfair Exchange also has an independent market for enhanced place terms.

Mention will occasionally be made of these enhancements and concessions where and when we feel they will benefit readers of the *Weekend Card*.

The Sleeper Section by Marten Julian

Eagle's Way (3yr Chestnut Gelding)

Trained by Sir Mark Prescott and cost 95,000gns as a yearling, a three-parts brother to lightly raced 1m 4f maiden winner Franklet and a half-brother to 7f handicap winner Wolflet out of a 1m 2f/1m 4f Galtres Stakes winning daughter of Dansili. Has shaped with distinct promise in three runs, starting in a 7f maiden at Doncaster, went right at the start, keen and then staying on under hands and heels. Again showed ability next time in a 7f maiden at Kempton in November, drawn wide in stall 12 and on the outside of the field turning for home before plugging on at the finish. Revealed a little more on his final start at Wolverhampton later that month, fifth early stages and nudged out to finish seventh of nine, beaten seven and three-quarter lengths. Made a successful seasonal reappearance when responding to firm driving to win a 1m 2f 0-70 maiden handicap at Brighton. He won there off 67 and followed up under a 6lbs penalty at Doncaster, winning by three lengths with plenty in hand. Raised from 73 to 82, he stayed on very well to beat Definite next time at Nottingham, very well backed to 4/9 and subsequently raised a further 6lbs to 88. Improved again to win his fourth race on the trot from that mark at Pontefract and raised 8lbs to 96. Was entered for the Newmarket Sales last week but was withdrawn, probably to remain in training next season.

King Of Europe (3yr Bay Gelding)

This son of Ardad showed enough on his belated racecourse debut at Doncaster in August to suggest races will come his way. Unraced as a two-year-old, there was a favourable word for him beforehand and he displayed ability in this 6f novice stakes, making headway into third two furlongs from home before weakening inside the final furlong to finish fifth. Beaten 10 lengths by the 78-rated winner, he ran to a mark in the high 40s. He then beat just one home in a 6f novice stakes at Southwell, running to a mark through the 72-rated winner in the mid-40s. He pulled hard in the early stages of a 7f maiden at Carlisle and made his handicap debut off 52 in an extended 7f 0-55 at Newcastle. Ominously weak in the betting, he swerved right as the stalls opened and again raced keenly, travelling well enough at halfway before coming under pressure and dropping back to finish last. He shaped better next time at Newcastle in a 6f 0-55, beaten just two and three-quarter lengths, and then caught the eye back there in no uncertain terms dropped down to 5f, well away then switched to the nearside group at halfway before finding himself short of room only to come home strongly a never-nearer sixth, beaten four lengths. He has been dropped 2lbs, from 48 to 46, and now looks poised to win, probably over six or seven furlongs, but it would help if he settled better.

The Premier List Update - Flat by Marten Julian

These are the names of the Premier List qualifiers which feature in the 2022 Dark Horses Annual. The Premier List qualifiers from the newly published Dark Horses Jumps booklet will appear here in next week's bumper edition.

Bay Bridge (4yr Bay Colt)

Not a total surprise that he was able to win the Champion Stakes, even though those close to the horse – including the trainer Sir Michael Stoute – thought Baaeed was unbeatable. That is, of course, never the case with a racehorse but lines through the favourite's stable-companion My Prospero and Dubai Honour convince William Haggas that his colt underperformed. That apart, Sir Michael knew he had Bay Bridge in sparkling form at home and that the easy ground would suit him. He had sustained a foot problem when last seen in the Coral-Eclipse and before that things had not fallen his way at Royal Ascot, both times on ground firmer than ideal. As I've said all along the best may not be seen of this colt until he is asked to tackle a mile and a half next season. His future at stud is now secure, having won a Group 1 over a mile and a quarter, and given his preference for easy ground he could become a long-term consideration for the Arc.

Bayside Boy (3yr Bay Colt)

Disappointed on his return to action in the Poule d'Essai des Poulains in May, when badly drawn and not given a hard time when beaten, but shaped far better when beaten just two lengths after a troubled run in the St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot. Possibly unsuited to the quick ground when a staying-on fourth in a 1m Group 3 at Goodwood and appreciated the easier going when winning a 1m Listed race, blinkered for the first time, with something in hand at Sandown. Not quite the surprise some have made out when winning the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot, having drifted out to 33/1 from a midweek price of 16/1. His two-year-old form in Group 1 company entitled him to serious consideration while his Listed success at Sandown in September, where he wore blinkers for the first time, would have done his confidence the world of good. His turn of foot will stand him in good stead next season, when he may be stepped up to a mile and a quarter.

Ching Shih (3yr Bay Filly)

Trained by David Simcock, caught the eye last year when third on her debut in a 1m maiden at Newcastle before quickening clear to win a 1m novice stakes at Newbury in soft ground. Shaped quite well on her return when third in the Group 3 Musidora Stakes at York in May but did not progress from that run when last of six in a 1m 2f Listed contest at Newbury. Shaped quite well when staying on from arrears in a 1m 2f Listed race at Yarmouth last time out. May now be off to stud.

Cumulonimbus (3yr Chestnut Gelding)

Trained by Charlie Fellowes, caught the eye when third on his debut in a 7f maiden at Doncaster in October. Initially disappointing this season, in a novice at Nottingham when unsuited to the slow pace, and a 1m maiden at Newbury. Again, disappointing when a never-nearer sixth of eight in a 1m 2f 0-75 at Lingfield. Ran poorly at Southwell, first-time hood but struggling half-a-mile from home and beaten 18 lengths at the line. Looked a different horse next time at Yarmouth, well supported in the market and having his second run since being gelded, made all the running under Hollie Doyle to win a 1m 2f 0-80 with ease by three and a quarter lengths. Was raised 6lbs, from 71 to 77, and won from that mark last month at Haydock. Raised 6lbs, from 77 to 83, and clearly now showing connections what they were hoping to see from him earlier in the season. Not disgraced when a three-quarter length third to Mr Alan at Nottingham, for which he has been harshly raised from 83 to 86.

Dark Vega (3yr Bay Filly)

Trained by Jessica Harrington, stoutly-bred, related to hurdlers and a Prix du Cadran winner, did well to win a 7f maiden at the Curragh last season. Has a pedigree laden with stamina and inevitably found the mile too sharp on her return at the Curragh. Duly improved for the step up to 1m 2f at Roscommon, plugging on in the straight to finish third, but did not look that keen in the closing stages, hanging right. Stayed on to finish third in an extended 1m 2f handicap at Sligo, never nearer than at the finish, and went close in a 1m 1f handicap last time out at Punchestown, first-time sheepskins, losing ground at the start and finishing strongly into second. Didn't get the best of runs when stepped up to an extended 1m 4f at Thurles and again disappointed at Navan, finishing sixth of 10. Sold for 120,000 guineas at Tattersalls last week.

Duke De Sessa (3yr Bay Colt)

Trained by Dermot Weld, shaped well when third on his debut in a 7f maiden at Galway in July before winning a 1m maiden at the Curragh a month later. Raised in class for the Group 1 National Stakes and finished sixth, not given a hard time, before stepping up to 1m 1f to win a Group 3 at Leopardstown, overcoming a wide draw and interrupted passage to win going away. Not disgraced when third on his seasonal return in a Group 3 at Leopardstown in April but disappointed when a staying-on fifth of seven to Stone Age in the Derby Trial at Leopardstown. Again, did steady late work when a never-nearer fifth of nine in the Irish 2,000 Guineas, and improved on that display when staying on steadily to finish second in a 1m 2f Group 3 at the Curragh. Duly appreciated the step up to 1m 4f at Leopardstown, well supported beforehand and responding gamely to get up in the last stride to beat Thunder Kiss by a short head. Not given a very enterprising ride in the

Group 2 Prix Chaudenay over 1m 7f at Longchamp, held up in arrears off a steady pace and coming home full of running to finish a never nearer half-length third. He has an entry in a 1m 4f Listed race at Naas on Sunday, for which he is top-rated on 110 (2.57).

Dun Na Sead (3yr Chestnut Filly)

Trained by Kieran Cotter, made all to win a 5f maiden at the Curragh last September from subsequent winners in second and third. Not seen out again until reappearing in a 6f contest at Fairyhouse in May, showing early speed until weakening inside the final furlong. Beaten five times since then and has become very disappointing.

Lionel (3yr Chestnut Gelding)

Eye-catching debut when second in a 1m novice stakes at Newbury in October, tucked away on the rails before being sharply switched for a clear run to come with a swooping run to lead before being caught close home. Again shaped well on his seasonal return when third in a 1m 3f maiden at Newbury, coming from way off the pace to finish never nearer in third. Displayed improved form when getting up close home to win the Listed Cocked Hat Stakes at Goodwood, doing his best work late. Ran no sort of race when last of eight, beaten 33 lengths, in the Irish Derby. Clearly not at his best on that occasion and now with John and Thady Gosden. Shaped as if in need of the race when third in a 1m 6f Listed race at Ascot, keeping on well trying to concede 3lbs to the first and second, rated 6lbs and 10lbs superior on BHA figures. Inevitably raised 7lbs, from 102 to 109, for that effort and will be a force to reckon with in staying races next season.

Magisterial (3yr Bay Gelding)

Trained by John Gosden, finished fourth in a 1m maiden at Newmarket last September before staying on steadily to win a 1m novice stakes at Haydock in October. Did well to concede a 7lbs penalty to debutant Ruling Dynasty, who was rated in the top group of Godolphin's unraced three-year-olds, on his return to action at Leicester but form let down at Windsor by the third. Failed to shine in the Dante Stakes at York, when the trainer said he was unsettled by the unruly behaviour of the horse in the adjoining stall. Subsequently gelded and shaped adequately in a 1m 2f 0-105 at Newbury, racing freely but travelling well for a long way before fading back to third. Sold last week at Tattersalls for 425,000gns.

Nobel (3yr Chestnut Colt)

Trained by Andrew Balding, won a 1m novice stakes at Kempton in December, stretching out to win by three lengths with plenty in hand. Form nothing special and sustained a setback soon afterwards. Strongly supported in the market and confidently ridden from the front to win a 1m 2f novice stakes at Epsom. Appeared to have his limitations exposed when last of eight,

beaten 21 lengths, in a 1m 2f Listed race at Newmarket on Saturday. May have been unsuited to the soft ground and should be seen in a better light next season.

Traila (4yr Chestnut Gelding)

Unraced at two and made a belated racecourse debut in a 1m 2f novice stakes at Leicester in April, 2021, finishing fifth under a considerate ride. Next appeared in October and battled on well to win a 1m 1f novice stakes at Wolverhampton. Shaped with some promise on his belated return to action in a 1m 4f novice stakes at Doncaster running third, on unfavourable terms, to a couple of useful three-year-olds. Had his first run for new connections in a 1m 6f 0-105 at Newmarket, held up in the early stages and having every chance until appearing to tire. Shaped better next time at Yarmouth, just failing by a short-head to catch The Gadget Man. Was raised 3lbs, from 88 to 91, but could not cope with the heavy ground at Doncaster, beaten 24 lengths over an extended 1m 6f. Will be seen to greater effect on better ground next season.

The Selection

Duke De Sessa (2.57 Naas Sunday)

The Ante-Post Agenda by Marten Julian

There are no selections for this section at this time.

Under The Radar by Marten Julian

Bon Retour has an entry for the 2m 4f Class 2 hurdle at Aintree on Saturday (2.45).

The race is not a handicap, which means the mare is unfavourably treated with a few of her rivals. For example she is 21lbs wrong with Sceau Royal and 25lbs wrong with Brewin'upastorm, to name but two.

It's not like Nicky Richards to risk compromising a horse's handicap mark in such a way, but she is probably better than her rating of 123 and perhaps opportunities for her are not readily to hand.

I suggest we monitor the market closely for a guide to expectations.

Idiopathic is entered for a 6f 0-55 nursery at Chelmsford on Tuesday evening (6.00). An opening mark of 50 is hardly lenient on the bare evidence to hand,

but she has shown more ability than her finishing positions reflect and it will be interesting to see if there is any market interest in her.

There are no entries for **Artic Breeze**, **Baron Slick**, **Black Buble**, **Inaam** and **Powerful Hero**.

Baron Slick, Black Buble and Powerful Hero will now be dropped from this section.

The Selections

Bon Retour (2.45 Aintree Saturday), Idiopathic (6.00 Chelmsford Tuesday)

A Look Ahead by Marten Julian

It's Breeders' Cup weekend but as you may be aware the meeting does little for me these days.

It's different when a home-grown champion turns up, but most of them have got beaten and I struggle with the form of the Stateside contenders.

One horse that I will be keeping my eye on is **Silver Knott**, who runs in the Juvenile Turf on Friday evening (10.40).

The son of Lope De Vega is the first foal of Italian Group 1 winner God Given and so has a pedigree that screams out for middle distances next season. His form with Chaldean and Epictetus holds up well – it puts him within striking distance of Auguste Rodin – but I am surprised to see a colt with his profile, and aspirations to possible Derby potential, being asked to tackle a mile at Keeneland in November.

He is not great value either, at a top price of 11/8, but I expect to see him doing his best work late in the race and hopefully learning plenty with a view to next year. I have had a little on him for the Derby.

The only other horse that I want to bring to your attention is **Persian Force**.

It was a long time ago that the son of Mehmas ran away with the Brocklesby Stakes at Doncaster and despite a season operating effectively at a decent level he has not, perhaps, quite scaled the heights that looked possible soon after he passed the post that day back in March.

He did, though, run second in the Coventry Stakes before winning the July Stakes, since when he has made the frame in three Group 1 races – most recently third in the Middle Park.

His BHA mark of 113 places him a few pounds adrift of the top tier, but he is tough, battle hardened and consistent and these attributes will serve him well in the Juvenile Turf Sprint at Keeneland on Friday evening (7.00).

The engagement of Frankie Dettori is a bonus and the 12/1 on offer with Bet365 makes some appeal each-way.

Moving to more familiar climes, I am looking forward to seeing Mighty Potter make his chase debut at Down Royal on Friday (3.15).

The five-year-old was rated 150 over hurdles and this step up to an extended 2m 3f on easy ground offers the perfect introduction.

He won't be much of a price, and nor will his stable-companion American Mike, who makes his hurdling debut over an extended 2m 6f earlier in the day (12.20).

It's interesting to see that Gordon Elliott is placing him to start his new career over this trip, rather than work his way up from two miles. Having won a point-to-point and looking at his pedigree it should not be a problem, but he showed loads of speed in a high level of bumper company and the decision is intriguing.

At an early show of 1/3 he is, like Mighty Potter, one to watch.

Finally, Hard Iron, who won well for us on his handicap debut at Ayr last week, will be popular if he turns out again from a 7lbs higher mark at Carlisle on Monday (3.20). He won with at least that amount in hand but they won't be giving much away.

The Selections

Persian Force E/W (7.00 Keeneland Friday), Silver Knott (10.40 Keeneland Friday)

The Retrospective by Marten Julian

Tanganyika finished tailed off at Ascot on Saturday, beaten 57 lengths on ground that was probably too quick for him.

His previous four starts had been on heavy ground and a 4lbs drop, from 120 to 116, will help his cause when conditions turn in his favour. He remains of interest.

I brought Firm Footings and Deeply Superficial to your attention last week and both won for Gordon Elliott at Galway.

The former did well to win the bumper given how stamina-endowed his bottom line is. He is a half-brother to five winners including Monalee and Many Stars, so he is bred to stay much further than this. I expect him to prove very useful when he switches to staying hurdles.

Deeply Superficial also did well to beat her 14 rivals in the maiden hurdle at Galway because she, too, is bred to stay.

Both horses can go on to better things.

Previously Noted Horses

**Designer, Hard Iron, Hobsons Bay, Paddington, Poetikel Piece,
Resolute Man, Tanganyika**

Jodie's Jottings by Jodie Standing

It was a week of disappointment with Pilot Show starting us off on a sticky note when pulling up on his reappearance at Worcester last Thursday on his first start in a handicap from a mark of 106. Although he travelled well through the race, he soon had no more to give after he came off the bridle down the far side, but I don't believe it was lack of ability that led to the poor performance. Maybe he wasn't fit? He's left me scratching my head a little.

On Friday, Piaff Bubbles was strongly supported on his handicap bow from a mark of 98 at Wetherby. Ridden with heavy restraint, he lacked confidence over his hurdles and was faced with a stiff task to come from the rear in a slowly-run race. He's better than that and he's one to keep onside.

Saturday was frustrating. Gumball was another horse to receive market support, having been as big as 14/1 earlier in the week. He went off at odds of 100/300 but could never really land a blow after some less than convincing jumping. He did attempt to lay down a challenge turning for home but couldn't quite find the gears to sustain his effort and was eventually beaten 15 lengths into fourth.

Poppa Poutine didn't run a bad race to finish fifth in what was a deep handicap chase. He lost his position before turning into the straight, and although he kept on at the one pace, he could never lay a glove on the leaders. He's only six and should find winning opportunities this season.

Camulus was ominously weak in the betting and shaped like a horse in need of three miles – not surprising given he's a half-brother to Irish National winner, Freewheelin Dylan.

Then, in the bumper the ride on Breaking Cover was baffling to say the least. Anchored in rear, his jockey was still motionless entering the final couple of furlongs but then asked for an effort as if he was riding a five-furlong sprinter. Doing his best, the horse passed tiring opposition but was never able to get on terms, eventually only beaten seven and a half lengths. He was most definitely the eye-catcher of the day.

Finally, on Sunday I feared Rock On Cowboy wouldn't be suited to soft ground at Carlisle and that seemed to be the case after the gelding was pulled up before two from home. His dam won a point-to-point on firm ground so I was surprised connections allowed him to take his chance.

Thursday

To start the week, at Sedgefield I'm looking forward to seeing Ruth Jefferson's mare, Thermusa, try to follow up her Rules debut success over this course and distance at the start of last month (2.55).

The daughter of Kayf Tara didn't have much to beat that day and made all to win as she liked by eight and a half lengths. Here she faces some stiffer opposition in Donald McCain's last-time-out winner, Sweet Auburn, and the Rules debutant, Anti Bridgie, but I still believe Thermusa will have their measure and extend her unbeaten record to three.

Friday

I'm writing this before Friday's declarations come through, so I apologise if mentioning horses who do not appear.

I want to be with **Colonel Harry** wherever he goes this week. He has four entries starting at Fontwell today (1.00), then either Ffos Las (1.05) or Sandown (2.00) on Sunday, Carlisle on Monday (1.10) or 1.15 Hereford Tuesday.

Jamie Snowden's five-year-old was heavily supported for his Rules debut at Uttoxeter at the start of last month and was far from disgraced in finishing seven lengths adrift of a talented-looking type in Mofasa, who has since scored in a deeper race at Cheltenham for Michael Scudamore.

Colonel Harry took a keen hold that day and didn't jump with the greatest accuracy, but he did stick to his task in admirable fashion down the home straight when trying to match strides with the eventual winner. Left behind approaching the final flight, he kept on at the one pace all the way to the line and maintained a gap of just over seven lengths clear of the third.

There's more to come from this horse and, judging by the money that came from him before the off, he must've been going well at home. Let's keep him onside wherever he turns up.

Down at Exeter, keep an eye on **Times Are Blue** in the novices' hurdle (12.40), although I'd much rather he declared for Kempton on Monday (2.00), which looks an easier option.

Oliver Sherwood's good-looking grey won his only start in a bumper at Plumpton in May, when looking decidedly green once turning into the straight before finding plenty inside the final furlong to cross the line just over two lengths ahead of El Muchacho.

That form doesn't look great, but I was also taken with his hurdling debut at Hereford last month when no match for the easy winner, Getaway Drumlee, but he kept on in eye-catching fashion all the way to the line under a confidence-boosting ride from Jonathan Burke.

That will have taught him plenty and he looks the type who'll find any amount of improvement once he fully gets the hang of things. A greater test of stamina will also suit and he's definitely a horse to keep on the right side of.

The Exeter card has attracted some excellent entries, but field sizes will depend on how much rain is received come race day.

In the novices' hurdle over the extended 2m, I'll be having an interest in Joe Tizzard's **Western General** (1.15).

The four-year-old shaped like a promising individual when attempting to match strides with the well-regarded Captain Teague on his pointing debut at Knockanard in February. Jumping equally as well, if not better on occasion than the eventual winner, the Valirann gelding started to feel the pinch on the steep climb to the second from home and dropped to third on the run to the line with The Ballyline Man coming from off the pace to nab second,

That form is yet to be tested, but it shaped like a good race, and the winner and runner-up have since joined Paul Nicholls and Willie Mullins respectively.

Given the way Joe Tizzard has hit the ground running since taking over the training licence from his dad, I'm expecting a bold bid from this new recruit.

Up at Hexham, **De Legislator** could make his anticipated debut for Lucinda Russell in the novices' hurdle over 2n 4f (1.58), *although* he's also entered at Kelso on Saturday over an extended 2m 6f (12.33).

I'm not surprised to see the yard asking him to tackle a trip on his first outing, given the impression he made when looking an out-and-out stayer when beating Snake Roll between the flags at Oldcastle in April.

He helped to force the pace that day and jumped well before landing in front over the fourth from home. Pestered and challenged over the final few fences, it was to his great credit that he kept battling all the way to the line to eventually win by a hard-fought length from his now stable companion, who has already franked the form when winning by 15 lengths at Kelso a couple of weeks ago.

De Legislator has the potential to be above average, especially further down

the line. There could be something a bit sharper to beat him on debut but he's very much an exciting prospect.

Later, it should pay to keep **Captain Quint** onside as he steps into novice handicap company from a mark of just 115 on his debut over fences (2.35).

Rose Dobbin's embryonic chaser made a winning Rules debut over this sort of distance on the hurdles track here almost 12 months ago before going on to finish an excellent third behind the now 136-rated Crystal Glory at Newcastle in December when upped in trip to 2m 6f.

Off the track since, he's obviously met with a setback, but that doesn't bother me with this yard which is more than capable at getting one ready at home. Bred with plenty of stamina, I hope Craig Nichol makes plenty of use of him as I believe he's a much better horse than his opening mark.

Over in Ireland, the bumper at Down Royal is usually an informative race and it's unsurprising to see Gordon Elliott with multiple entries given he's won five of the last seven renewals. Better Days Ahead, King Of Kingsfield and Stellar Story are all point winners who feature in *The Point-To-Point Recruits 2022/23*.

They all have tall reputations, and I would expect whichever he calls upon to be hard to beat (3.50). All three are also pencilled in for the bumper at Down Royal on Saturday (4.10) – a race previously won by American Mike, Sir Gerhard, Easywork, Malone Road and Death Duty to name a few.

Saturday

We have another busy day in store but not too much in the way of selections.

Up at Kelso, I'll be affording **Brandy McQueen** another chance after his fine effort to fill the runner-up spot over course and distance last time out (1.43).

He travelled sweetly that day for Edward Austin but couldn't sustain his effort after the last when overhauled by Cosmic Outlaw, who was given a good ride by his 10lb claimer, Dylan Johnston.

Brandy McQueen is already a winner over this trip here, and he's only 2lb higher than last time. I believe there's improvement to come providing the ground doesn't go too soft.

Later, **Everyday Champagne** and **Gentleman De Mai** are two who look to have plenty in hand from their marks in the handicap hurdle over the extended 2m 4f (3.24).

Rose Dobbin's runner is burdened with topweight from his mark of 104, but he's a big, classy sort of horse so should be able to carry it, whereas the Nicky Richards-trained Everyday Champagne finds himself further down the weights from his mark of 96. The latter actually held an entry over fences a couple of weeks ago, but his trainer obviously feels there's unfinished business over the smaller obstacles first.

Down at Wincanton, don't forget to keep an eye on Tonto Foley in his quest for a handicap mark (2.25). Christian Williams' gelding was much too free when pulled up at Ffos Las on his most recent start. He was also persistently hassled by a loose horse, which did his cause no favours. This isn't a very deep race so he could go well, but I fully expect his time to shine will come when he's handicapping.

The yard also has point-to-point recruit, Not Long Left, entered in the bumper (4.05). He'll likely need his first run, but his pointing form looks OK and connections paid a fair bit for him at the sales (£200,000).

Unsurprisingly, this looks quite a deep bumper, but don't be surprised if Merrijig outruns his anticipated double-figure price.

John Berry is far better known for his Flat performers, but this four-year-old by Schiaparelli has shown a couple of pieces of decent form, including last time at Hexham when rallying to finish third, having been short of room on the run-in. He had the well-thought of Myretown behind him that day and just over a length in front of him was Sunday's Carlisle bumper scorer, Perculator.

He's not entitled to win given the reputations and purchase prices of some of the potential line-up, but his experience won't be lost on him, nor will match fitness.

Monday

Carlisle has enjoyed some excellent meetings since their jumps action returned, and we look to have another treat in store on Monday.

Nicky Richards doesn't often go home without at least one winner from his local track and **Nells Son** could be out for redemption after his narrow defeat on seasonal and chase bow at Ayr a fortnight ago (1.45).

The seven-year-old developed into a useful hurdler last term, winning the Grade 2 Premier Novices' Hurdle at Kelso in March before rounding off his season with a fourth-placed effort behind Three Stripe Life in the Grade 1 Mersey Novices' Hurdle at Aintree's Grand National meeting.

A chaser on looks, he was a little sticky over a few of his fences at Ayr, and Danny McMenemy rightly gave him time to warm to the task. Despite having work to do entering the straight and spending longer than ideal in the air over the fourth and third from home, he jumped the final two fences well and landed with momentum over the last which propelled him to the lead up the run-in, only for the winner to rally in the closing stages and win by a neck.

Left alone on a mark of 138, I believe the Carlisle fences and track with its stiff finish will suit him well. He should be hard to beat.

The Selections

Colonel Harry (12.30 Fontwell Friday or 1.05 Ffos Las or 2.00 Sandown Sunday or 1.10 Carlisle Monday or 1.15 Hereford Tuesday), Times Are Blue (12.40 Exeter Friday or 2.00 Kempton Monday), Western General (1.15 Exeter Friday), Captain Quint (2.35 Hexham Friday), Brandy McQueen (1.43 Kelso Saturday), Everyday Champagne (3.24 Kelso Saturday), Gentleman De Mai (3.24 Kelso Saturday), Nells Son (1.45 Carlisle Monday)

The Two-Year-Old Review by Dan Briden

Kingman enjoyed something of a renaissance in 2022 after a quiet season or two at pattern level. One criticism of his stock would be that they don't always progress as expected (see also: scratchy action and high head carriage), which will make for interesting viewing next season when the likes of Fillies' Mile heroine **Commissioning**, Gimcrack Stakes winner **Noble Style** and Tattersalls Stakes winner **Nostrum** embark upon their three-year-old campaigns.

However, one of his progeny who made a deep impression at a lower level was the Ralph Beckett-trained **Remarquee**. She is out of a 10f Listed winning half-sister to connections' ill-fated high-class stayer Scope and from the family of Oaks winner Look Here.

The last-named made a winning start to her career at Salisbury in late September and Remarquee followed suit on the exact same card in a 7f novice event. She was never too far away but had to work her way through greenness before readily running down the experienced and useful Bresson to score by a very cosy 1¼ lengths.

Pinpointing what trip she'll prove best over isn't easy. The majority of her female line suggests middle-distances will suit well, but her sire's speed influence will likely see her prove best at up to 10f. Whatever her stamina requirements may be, she heads into 2023 as one of the brightest prospects in training.

Sticking with Beckett, he also unleashed the well-bred **Bluestocking** to make a winning debut on the same card in the 1m novice (the race won by the aforementioned Look Here way back in 2007). The daughter of Camelot is the fifth foal of Matron Stakes winner Emulous, whose previous foals to race had proven useful but nothing more.

However, Bluestocking looks set to buck that trend if her debut performance

was anything to go by. Threatening to be held back by greenness for a long way, everything finally clicked entering the final furlong and she swept through to lead inside the final 100 yards or so to record 1¼-length margin of victory over colt Tony Montana.

Her pedigree is somewhat opposite to that of Remarquee, inasmuch as she's by a stamina influence in Camelot and out of a smart miler with some speedy sorts close up in her pedigree. That said, she was strong at the finish over 1m on easy ground, so the prospects of her staying further than 10f are greater than in the case of Remarquee.

Lezoo won the Cheveley Park Stakes in September for Beckett, completing a fine first season in which her only defeat in five runs came in the Duchess of Cambridge Stakes at the July meeting. By Zoustar and out of a 6f Group 3 winner, there must be a doubt she will stay 1m next year while her diminutive stature also raises questions as to just how much more there'll be to come in 2023.

Of his colts, **Salt Bay** is one who should take high rank in 2023. The son of Farhh overcame inexperience and a stumble to make a winning start at Haydock, and he ran with real credit in defeat when third to Proud And Regal in the Group 1 Criterium International at Saint-Cloud just a month later. He has all the hallmarks of a very smart middle distance three-year-old in the making.

His owners, Valmont, has a clutch of promising prospects for next season. **Trust The Stars** made a winning start Newmarket, and the German-bred daughter of Sea The Stars looks another filly from this stable who'll likely be taking in an Oaks trial next spring. **Lose Yourself** made a winning start on the July course before being narrowly denied in the Group 3 Oh Sharp Stakes on the Rowley Mile.

However, perhaps their biggest improver in 2023 will be a twice-raced maiden called **Mr Buster**. The son of Sea The Stars is a late-May foal who has shaped well in defeat both times, chasing home the promising King of Steel on his debut at Nottingham before finishing third at Kempton. Lacking the speed to threaten seriously both times, it would be something of a surprise were middle/staying trips unable to bring about significant improvement from this half-brother to Modun and Patkai.

Another UK-based operation whose youngsters enjoyed a good season was that of Andrew Balding's Kingsclere base.

The undoubted headline act was Dewhurst Stakes winner **Chaldean**. The son of Frankel met with defeat on debut but has since won all four starts, including the Acomb Stakes and Champagne Stakes prior to his Group 1 victory at Newmarket. He is a thoroughly likable type who goes about his business in a straightforward fashion, and it is hard to believe he won't train

on and prove himself just as smart at three. For all he's just shy of top-class at present, he shouldn't be underestimated when it comes to the 2000 Guineas or other top 1m events.

The Foxes is a son of Churchill out of the excellent producer Tanaghum, making him a close relation to connections' smart performer Bangkok.

He was well spoken of by his handler in the *Two-Year-Old Guide* back in the spring and duly shaped with promise when fourth at Newbury on his debut back in May. Unable to land in a blow in the Chesham Stakes when next seen, he won a good maiden at Glorious Goodwood before taking the step up to Group 2 level in his stride when denying next-time-out Group 1 winner Dubai Mile in the Royal Lodge Stakes. That he has achieved so much at two bodes very well for The Foxes, who is sure to relish middle distances in his second season.

Breeze-Up purchase **Chateau** enjoyed a good first season, winning a 6f Listed event at Newbury in July and following that with solid efforts in defeat in the Richmond Stakes and Gimcrack Stakes. Though his limitations have been somewhat exposed at Group level, the fact remains that he ought to have a tad more improvement for tackling a seventh furlong.

Jeff Smith's good Dashiba line enjoyed success this season, with **Stormbuster** (by Dubawi out of Barshiba, thus making him a brother to Juddmonte International heroine Arabian Queen) landing the Haynes, Hanson and Clark conditions event at Newbury in September. **Frankness** won a pair of Chester 7f novice events in resounding fashion before finding the May Hill Stakes at a step too far.

However, perhaps the most promising one from that family for 2023 will be the aforementioned Arabian Queen's colt by Kingman named **Arabian Storm**. His only outing to date saw him finish second to Enfjar in a 7f maiden at Newmarket in early October, run down only late by that rival having shown professionalism through. He's a banker for a 1m novice/maiden event and should make up into an above-average performer next year.

Others from Kingsclere who ought to do well next year are recent Doncaster, 1m fillies' novice winner **Sea of Roses**, twice-raced maiden **Juryman** and once-raced duo **Eleanor Cross** and **Prosecco**.

Sir Michael Stoute's headline act in the juvenile division was undoubtedly the Kingman colt **Nostrum**, who made a deep impression when winning on debut at Sandown before following up in the Group 3 Tattersalls Stakes at Newmarket next time. He could only manage third in the Dewhurst Stakes over the same course and distance the following month, but it would be surprising if he didn't progress again at three years given his pedigree and physique.

Sadly, the royally-owned **Theme Park** was recently sold abroad after confirming his debut promise at Kempton behind the smart Silver Knott with a workmanlike all-the-way success back there next time. He looked sure to do better still at three.

Perhaps his most promising filly heading into next season will be the well-related **Infinite Cosmos**. The daughter of Sea The Stars is a daughter of 12f 3yo Listed winner Waila, herself a half-sister to the dam of high-class middle-distance performers Crystal Ocean (also by Sea The Stars), Crystal Capella and Hillstar. She caught the eye with a strong finish on debut in a 1m fillies' novice event at Doncaster in October, very nearly doing enough to overhaul once-raced winner Sea of Roses. Her improvement at three over 10f+ ought to be both swift and pronounced.

Stoute saddled the beautifully-bred **Humankind** in the other division of that race on the Doncaster card. The daughter of Frankel is from a typically-excellent Niarchos Family bloodline, but she was held back by inexperience first time out. In rear and driven along soon after halfway, she only really began to get the idea inside the final furlong as she came home in sixth behind Soul Sister.

Oliver Show and **Pumalin Park** are a pair of once-raced colts who were too green to be seen to best effect when midfield in 7f AW events at Chelmsford and Lingfield respectively, but both are liable to make giant strides as they gain more experience.

Charlie Appleby numerically enjoyed an excellent campaign with his juveniles, though I am sure there will be some disappointment that a few of their impressive novice/maiden winners couldn't convert that promise into wins at a higher level.

One colt who didn't have that problem was **Noble Style**, who ended his juvenile campaign unbeaten from three starts. However, it was a rather stop-start season, missing the Coventry Stakes because of a setback and not seen again after his impressive Gimcrack Stakes success in August. It's an all-too-familiar tale where the progeny of Kingman are concerned, and it's hoped he will have a clearer run at three. Quite whether he will stay 1m remains to be seen, but he's a top-level winner in waiting on the evidence of his three outings to date.

Silver Knott is a Lope de Vega colt out of a Group 1-winning half-sister to the very smart middle-distance performer Postponed. Having shaped well on debut, he won his next two starts including the Group 3 Solario Stakes at Sandown, though met with defeat when last of three behind Chaldean in the Champagne Stakes the following month. He was soon back on track when narrowly denying Epictetus in the Autumn Stakes at Newmarket in October, appearing to relish the step up to 1m. He heads to the Breeders'

Cup on Friday evening for the Juvenile Turf event. Whatever happens there, his profile suggests he ought to have more improvement in him next year, especially over 10f.

Stablemate **Flying Honours** has an identical profile to Silver Knott. Having run well on debut, he too won his next two starts including a Listed event at Salisbury in devastating fashion before being turned over by The Foxes in the Royal Lodge Stakes. However, he bounced back to land the 10f Listed Zetland Stakes at Newmarket, relishing the additional yardage as he saw off Blanchland. By Sea The Stars and from the family of Lammtarra, it's hardly surprising that he saw out that trip so well, and he will undoubtedly get another two furlongs next year. Quite whether he's up to Classic standard remains to be seen, however.

Naval Power won his first four starts, with a couple of those successes coming at Listed level. However, he came up short when stepped up to Group 1 level for the Dewhurst Stakes, coming home a well-beaten sixth of seven behind Chaldean and reportedly bleeding from the nose. He suddenly has a good few questions to answer.

Victory Dance is a Dubawi half-brother to Skitter Scatter who seemed to have his limitations somewhat exposed when only third of four to Nostrum in the Group 3 Tattersalls Stakes when last seen. He had previously chased home Isaac Shelby in the Group 2 July Stakes and won a Listed event at Newbury.

Castle Way is an Almanzor half-brother to Palace Pier who won two of his four outings this term, putting behind him an odds on reversal at the notoriously tricky Epsom when making short work of a mark of 89 in a 1m nursery at Doncaster. He should have more to come at three when tackling slightly longer distances.

One of the more interesting long-term prospects from the yard is **City of Kings**. The son of Kingman is the first foal of Lancashire Oaks winner Horseplay and backed up a hugely eye-catching debut fifth at Sandown (after completely blowing the start) with a free-going, all-the-way success at Ascot next time, finding plenty to score by half a length from Onslow Gardens. It is hoped he will mature with age and prove more amenable for restraint because his potential is undeniable.

Military Order is a brother to 2021 Derby winner Adayar and built on his debut promise to land a 1m novice event at Newmarket connections took with Hurricane Lane a couple of years ago. Although he doesn't quite look to have the potential of the aforementioned pair heading into his three-year-old campaign, it would be a surprise all the same if he didn't leave the bare level of form he's shown to date a long way behind once tackling middle distances.

A once-raced colt who might have Classic potential is the beautifully-bred **Imperial Emperor**. The son of Dubawi is bred along similar lines as connections' top-class middle-distance performer Ghaiyyath, being out of that one's Grade 1 winning half-sister Zhukova. He was sent off the 13/8 market leader for his debut in a 1m novice at Newmarket in early October and justified that confidence with a 3½-length victory over Attaj. For all it's more about substance of style at this early stage, it's hard to believe Imperial Emperor won't have a bundle of improvement for tackling 10/12f in 2023.

Another top handler who enjoyed a fruitful 2022 with his juveniles is, of course, Aidan O'Brien.

The exploits of the recently-retired **Blackbeard**, **Auguste Rodin**, **Little Big Bear**, **Meditate** et al hardly need going over, though the second-named of that group has vast potential heading into 2023. So, too, does the twice-raced and slightly forgotten **Statuette**. The daughter of Justify is closely related to Cheveley Park Stakes winner Tenebrism and looked set to make a major impact on the juvenile scene herself when following a taking debut success with victory in a 6f Group 2 at Naas in June.

She quite clearly met with a setback not long after as she hasn't been seen again since, but Statuette still rates a fine prospect for next season, when she ought to find 1m well within range.

Given the sheer depth of his string, O'Brien unsurprisingly has some lightly-raced/unraced juveniles who look sure to make a splash in 2023.

Alexandroupolis looked a colt of some potential when accounting for stablemate Espionage in an 8.5f maiden at Galway in September. The son of Camelot is out of a half-sister to connections' St Leger winner Kew Gardens and impressed with the manner in which he travelled throughout on debut, switched to challenge and running on well. The runner-up won next time out before going down narrowly in Group 1 company in France to further enhance this colt's credentials.

Aesop's Fables, **Age of Kings**, **Cairo**, **Continuous**, **Denmark**, **Hiawatha**, **Never Ending Story**, **The Antarctic** and **Victoria Road** all enjoyed productive juvenile campaigns, while **Paddington** looked a bright prospect when storming clear to win a 7f maiden at the Curragh in mid-October.

Canute, **Joaquin Sorolla**, **Milwaukee** and **Red Riding Hood** are just a few once-raced maidens who look sure to make above-average improvement, while unraced types such as **All Time Great** (ch f Justify - Curvy), **Ballsbridge** (br c Lord Kanaloa - Happily), **Victorium** (b f Deep Impact - Minding) and **World Peace** (b f Frankel - How High The Moon) all typically look the part on paper.

There are so many more from other yards that deserve a brief mention.

and My Emma. Although sire Wootton Bassett brings some speed into the mix, it isn't difficult to envisage significant improvement forthcoming from Al Riffa next term over middle distances.

Joseph's brother Donnacha tasted Group 1 success himself via **Proud And Regal's** victory in the Group 1 Criterium International, his Galileo narrowly denying father Aidan's Espionage. Out of high-class miler Simply Perfect, Proud And Regal ought to make up into a Classic contender in 2023, when he's a banker to stay middle distances.

William Haggas's star turn was quite obviously Baaeed, while **Alpha Capture** achieved the most of his two-year-old brigade.

However, he looked to introduce a potentially smart filly at Newmarket last weekend called **Orchid Bloom**. The daughter of Farhh sailed clear of her rivals inside the final furlong to land the 7f fillies' novice event by 3¼ lengths from her nearest pursuer. She is out of a half-sister to 6f/1m Listed winner Bahia Breeze, herself the dam of connections' 1m Group 2/Listed winner Bashaayir. Orchid Bloom could well prove up to such a level herself if her debut display is anything to go by.

The most promising non-winner from the stable may well be the Australia colt **Piccadilly Circus**. His only outing to date saw him finish third to Buccabay in a 6f maiden at Ascot back in July, slowly away and very green for the most part before finishing off strongly from an impossible position. His absence since needn't prove detrimental to his future prospects, especially as Haggas's high-class performer Aqlaam filled the same position in the exact same race on his sole outing as a juvenile.

We didn't see the best of once-raced sorts such as **Amleto**, **Blue Missile**, **Florida** or **Market Value**, and all should do much better next season, while unraced talent such as **Heavens To Betsy** (b f Kingman - Wonderstruck), **Klondike** (b c Galileo - Koorra), **My Asteria** (b f Lope de Vega - My Titania), **Naqeeb** (b c Nathaniel - Aghareed), **One Last Time** (b f Fastnet Rock - Starship) and **Viva Bolivia** (b f Galileo - Aljazzi) provide Haggas with ample ammunition for the 2023 season.

Harry and Roger Charlton look to have some nice once-raced maidens to go to war with next season.

Alice Knyvet, **Elegancia** and **Zouzanna** are a trio of fillies who all shaped with distinct promise on their respective debuts, while the strong-travelling **Greek Order** - a full brother to the high-class Sangarius - is sure to convert that into wins next term once reaching fuller maturity. In fact, it wouldn't be a surprise were he to emulate fellow Kingman colt Thesis and turn up in something like the Britannia unless making greater strides than that colt managed pre-Royal Ascot.

Karl Burke has had a stellar season with his juvenile crop, with the likes of **Dramatised**, **Swingalong**, **Pillow Talk**, **Holloway Boy**, **Cold Case** and **Al Qareem** all winning at a good level whilst maiden/novice winners Liberty Lane, Overrule and Royal Rhyme all look promising individuals.

Dermot Weld's **Tahiyra** is a Siyouni half-sister to connections' very smart filly Tarnawa and looked something out of the ordinary herself when following her debut win with a hugely impressive success in the Group 1 Moyglare Stud Stakes. For all her handler's stock sometimes don't achieve what they ought to, she looks a leading Classic contender for 2023.

Roger Varian heads in 2023 with impressive Mill Reef Stakes winner **Sakheer** bidding to cement the impression he created at Newbury and not become another disappointment like their 2019 winner of that race, Pierre Lapin. Other promising sorts from the yard include impressive Yarmouth debut scorer **Lord of Biscay**, a half-brother to the yard's recent Queen Elizabeth II Stakes winner Bayside Boy. He was a shade disappointing when only sixth in the Horris Hill Stakes, but the ground on that occasion was very testing and he should do better at some stage.

The well-related trio of **Enfjar**, **Kolsai** and **Resolute Man** all won their maiden/novices well, as did **Tajalla** at Newmarket way back in April. Sadly, injury has limited him to just that one run, and it's hoped he hasn't 'missed the boat'.

The Eve Johnson Houghton Streets of Gold deserves an honourable mention having won all five of his starts this term, collecting nearly a quarter of a million pounds in the process despite having not contested a single pattern race. He has been well placed in valuable sales races by connections and has more than earned a crack at something better next year.

Eve has enjoyed yet another excellent season with her younger brigade, and **Rage of Bamby** is one who shouldn't be forgotten despite coming up short twice at Group 3 level. She had won her first two starts Newbury and Leicester, and it could be that a step back to 6f may see her to best effect.

Although a thrice-raced maiden, **Bussento** is one from her yard who should make a bigger impact next term once tackling 8/10f. He has enough about him to win a handicap or two from an initial mark of 86.

Perhaps the brightest Classic prospect away from Ballydoyle and Godolphin is Joseph O'Brien's **Al Riffa**. The son of Wootton Bassett chased home Hans Andersen on debut in a 7f maiden at the Curragh in July before going one better over the same course and distance the following month. He took the step up into Group 1 company in his stride when landing the National Stakes back at the Curragh in September, staying on best.

That he has achieved so much already bodes incredibly well given his pedigree, hailing from the strong staying family of Classic Cliche, Mizzou

One can hardly omit the Gosdens from such a piece and I will finish a review that could have made up the entirety of the *Weekend Card*! I mentioned their **Commissioning** at the beginning of this review. The daughter of Kingman has impressed with her finishing effort for all three victories to date, the last of which came in the Group 1 Fillies' Mile at Newmarket. She wasn't quite as flashy on that occasion, but it would still be something of a surprise if there wasn't more to come from her in 2023. She's an obvious contender for the 1000 Guineas back at HQ in May.

Epictetus made a winning start in a traditionally-strong 7f event at the July meeting and has since confirmed himself a high-class colt with excellent efforts in defeat in both the Royal Lodge Stakes and Vertem Futurity. Smart dam Thistle Bird got better with age and there's no reason why Epictetus won't follow suit.

Arrest fought bravely to land a 1m maiden at Sandown in the summer and, having followed up at very short odds at Ffos Las, found only Dubai Mile too good in the 10f Group 1 Criterium de Saint-Cloud. I saw him at Sandown and he really took the eye physically (lengthy, scopey individual), so he ought to have further improvement to come in 2023.

Bridestones and **Soul Sister** both looked smart prospects when making winning starts at Yarmouth and Doncaster respectively in September, almost certainly booking themselves in for Classic trials next spring, while **Coppice** was another to look potentially well above average when landing a 7f fillies' novice event on debut at Kempton. A full sister to the talented-but-fragile Calyx, hopefully she can stand more racing than he ever could.

A once-raced maiden who should make giant strides in 2023 is **A Dublin Lad**. The son of Ulysses is a half-brother to the high-class 7f performer Sacred and caught the eye with the manner in which he travelled on debut in a 1m event at Newmarket, unable to sustain his effort from off the pace inside the final furlong and having to settle for third. He could prove useful in time.

Ludmilla is another once-raced maiden who made an eye-catching debut at Newmarket, finishing strongly to take third in a 7f fillies' contest in which her yard has launched the careers of Dar Re Mi, The Fugue and Starscope.

The Gosdens have yet to run even half of their juvenile string, with the likes of **Alrashaka** (b f Frankel - Rumoush), **Apolo** (gr c Kingman - Sky Lantern), **Foment** (b c Frankel - Scuffle), **Growltiger** (ch c Dubawi - Dar Re Mi), **Mostabshir** (gr c Dark Angel - Handassa), **Providenciales** (ch f Australia - Falling Petals), **Queen For You** (b f Kingman - Fallen For You), **Ronni Scott** (b f Frankel - Jazzi Top), **Shadow of War** (gr c Roaring Lion - Reckoning), **Slipofthepen** (ch c Night of Thunder - Free Verse), **Takeed** (b c Dubawi - Taghrooda), **Theoryofeverything** (b c Frankel - Persuasive), **Torchlight** (b

f Invincible Spirit - Fireglow) and **Ziryab** (b c Kingman - Reem) yet to see action.

If that's all a bit too obvious for you, here's a handicap project for your tracker – Johnny Murtagh's **Givemefive**. The son of Holy Roman Emperor is a half-brother to the yard's Royal Ascot winner Create Belief, who won the Sandringham at the royal meeting before going on to land a Group 3 at the Curragh.

Givemefive hasn't shown anything approach that sort of ability just yet, but he has contested a trio of useful, big-field 7f maidens at the Curragh (twice) and Leopardstown. It doesn't appear he has been handed a handicap mark at this stage, but he appeals strongly as the type to excel in that sphere over 1m+ in 2023.

Thanks to all that have read my work over the years in this fantastic publication, and an even bigger thank you to Marten Julian and his team for the opportunity to do so.

The Weekend News by Ian Carnaby

It was good to see Matilda Picotte winning in style at Newmarket last week. She deserved to start favourite for the "Bosra Sham" Listed race on the strength of her third in the Lowther at York and she fully justified her starting price of 100/30 favourite. The Lowther is a Group 2 event and the fourth at York, Mawj, had since finished third in the Group 1 Cheveley Park over last week's course and distance so this was a good example of the Pattern system working out well.

One should not break one's own rules and I seldom bet or advise over jumps before the old Mackeson Gold Cup next week so I was very disappointed with Sporting John, who started at 7/4 favourite but was never travelling comfortably in the bet365 Hurdle at Wetherby and beat only two home.

One of the reasons I find the switch from the flat to jumps a little difficult concerns the remainder of a race when a well-tipped horse is not going to win. A mile out Tom O'Brien, one of my favourite NH jockeys, was clearly uneasy on Sporting John and one wondered how, given his connections (J P McManus and Philip Hobbs) the horse had remained rock solid in the market.

When tempted to play at short prices, you need every box to be ticked. The worry with Sporting John was an absence going back to January and that may well have been a factor. Anyway, he deserves another chance, although I think it fair to say that Hobbs, who has nothing at all to prove, is no longer in the group seeking to challenge Nicholls and Henderson when it comes to top-

class races. Those spaces are occupied by Alan King and, especially, Dan and Harry Skelton. Indeed, at the moment I'd be very careful if you fancy a horse in a valuable race and the Skeltons have one entered.

I've probably written enough about value over the past few weeks - Matilda Picotte was and Sporting John wasn't at those prices and that has nothing to do with the results or hindsight - but this week there was a good example of the way a market can close down when something looks as obvious to the bookmakers as it does to patient and diligent backers.

At Kempton on Monday Charlie Appleby had identified the Listed mile and a half race as a suitable target for both Warren Point and Wild Crusade.

The only feasible danger was William Haggas's Candleford, who'd not quite gone on as expected following a wide-margin win several weeks ago. Wild Crusade had beaten Warren Point in what now looks a decidedly warm three-runner affair at Ascot a while back but James Doyle (William Buick unavailable) preferred the latter and proved a good judge as he held his stable-companion by half a length. Taking no chances, Appleby had booked Jim Crowley for the runner-up; the pair drew right away and Candleford did indeed manage third.

It's not often I say a Tricast or a Trifecta seems the right way to go but it did cross my mind here. Unfortunately the prices were 6/4 favourite, 7/2 and 9/4. Now, if you opted for those three, you'd almost certainly want them in any order, which is six bets. The Tricast paid exactly £17. You do the maths, as they say, but the odds work out at just under 2/1! Just under 2/1 where you have to be spot-on and not worry about the jockey on the third taking it easy if clearly beaten; Cieren Fallon did not make that mistake here but anyone can see the value is non-existent. Given that the first two are lightly-raced Godolphin horses and the third is trained by a man who now represents that organisation's main threat in Britain, I'd have fancied those three to finish 1-2-3 more than anything I'll feel like backing over the coming winter months but I shall certainly find more appealing value.

The layers saw the danger, of course, just as they saw it with a rather taking filly called Astral Beau, winner of the final race at Newmarket on Saturday. 'Happy Christmas, see you all next year and here's a nice bit of value to see you on your way!' Well, not quite.

Astral Beau started at 7/2 favourite in a 17-runner handicap and so many runners were packed in at 12/1 or shorter that the total SP percentage was 130.6 - miles higher than any other race on the card. I love betting against the bookies and I've certainly been on good terms with several over the years but anyone who thinks it's a nicey-nicey game of soldiers against 'the old enemy' shouldn't be allowed out of the house.

That three-runner race mentioned above saw Shadwell's **Israr**, trained by

John Gosden and ridden by Crowley, finish third. No one took all that much notice at the time but, more recently, Israr was much too good for a fair field at Doncaster and looks very much the one to beat in the BetGoodwin November Handicap (3.13 Doncaster Saturday).

My immediate thought was that he'd win it because he looked better and better in the closing stages a fortnight ago but the 7lbs increase has to be a concern. Gosden is such an inch professional that he may feel Israr can prevail anyway, but there is surely a temptation to use his 3lbs claimer Benoit De La Sayette. The entries in the *Weekender* list Crowley but that may be semi-automatic with a Shadwell horse. It looks a key point to me and I'd try to compensate for as much of the 7lbs as I could but we shall see.

There are some intriguing contenders at the foot of the handicap.

Jane Chapple-Hyam's First Officer has done well since leaving Roger Varian and likes it here but the one to take the eye with a 'saver' in mind is Emmet Mullins's **Teed Up**, who stays much further than this over hurdles but ran a very fair race over a mile and a half at Leopardstown the other day, leaving the distinct impression that it was a 'sighter' with the November Handicap in mind. He will not mind the ground and will strip fresher than quite a few of his opponents.

Zip won the closing Free Bet Nose Loser At BetGoodwin Apprentice Jockeys' Handicap (3.45 Doncaster Saturday) two years ago and was one of the best selections on this page over the years, especially as he started at 16/1. On that occasion Richard Fahey booked Jessica Cooley (5), who gave the horse a splendid ride from in front, while this time he relies on the very promising Alec Voikhansky, who claims the same allowance.

Zip is very well at present and has slipped down to a mark of 78, which is perfect. I'd like the ground to be soft as opposed to heavy and you should adjust your bet accordingly, also taking advantage of the best each-way terms.

The Selections

**Israr (3.13 Doncaster Saturday), Teed Up (3.13 Doncaster Saturday),
Zip E/W (3.45 Doncaster Saturday)**

COMING SOON....

Next week's bumper edition of the *Card* includes Marten's **Champion Hurdle** preview. The following week will feature his **Gold Cup** preview.

Reference Sheet

Please be reminded, at the point of publication, the timings for each selection are correct. However, races can split into two divisions and this will alter things slightly. We advise you to check very carefully for selections in both divisions when this happens.

Friday

Colonel Harry*	Jodie's Jottings	12.30 Fontwell
Times Are Blue*	Jodie's Jottings	12.40 Exeter
Western General	Jodie's Jottings	1.15 Exeter
Captain Quint	Jodie's Jottings	2.35 Hexham
Persian Force E/W	A look Ahead (MJ)	7.00 Keeneland
Silver Knott	A look Ahead (MJ)	10.40 Keeneland

Saturday

Brandy McQueen	Jodie's Jottings	1.43 Kelso
Bon Retour	Under The Radar	2.45 Aintree
Israr	The Weekend News (IC)	3.13 Doncaster
Teed Up*	The Weekend News (IC)	3.13 Doncaster
Everyday Champagne	Jodie's Jottings	3.24 Kelso
Gentleman De Mai	Jodie's Jottings	3.24 Kelso
Zip E/W	The Weekend News (IC)	3.45 Doncaster

Sunday

Colonel Harry*	Jodie's Jottings	1.05 Ffos Las
Colonel Harry*	Jodie's Jottings	2.00 Sandown
Duke De Sessa	The Premier List	2.57 Naas
Teed Up*	The Weekend News (IC)	3.27 Naas

Monday

Colonel Harry*	Jodie's Jottings	1.10 Carlisle
Nells Son	Jodie's Jottings	1.45 Carlisle
Times Are Blue*	Jodie's Jottings	2.00 Kempton

Tuesday

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