

MANOR HOUSE

MONTHLY



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Nolton Cross has
excelled in 2023



Photo: Middleham Park Racing

Nolton Cross wins third race of year

NOLTON Cross was winning for the third time already this year when bolting up at Wolverhampton earlier in the month.

The Middleham Park Racing four-year-old bagged almost 10k when successful in the 1m4f Top Odds Every Day With BetUK Handicap at Dunstall Park on March 18.

With the race restricted to jockeys who had ridden fewer than 30 winners during the previous calendar year, Trevor Whelan got the leg up on the four-year-old Dark Angel gelding for the first time.

The former jump jockey had his mount in the front rank from the moment the stalls opened and, having driven him into the lead with a quarter

of a mile to go, the pair kept on strongly to come home three and a quarter lengths to the good over hot favourite Obsidian Knight, who was in receipt of almost two stone.

Nolton Cross has now won three of his four starts, and more than £25,000 in prize money in 2023, his only defeat coming when finishing a close-up second in a valuable Wolverhampton handicap earlier in the month.

His latest success was, undoubtedly, his best yet, earning him the Racing Post accolade of 'star performer' on the night and a rating of 100. Furthermore, Nolton Cross's victory was the 15th of the year for a Middleham Park Racing, taking their earnings past the £300,000 mark.

"Nolton Cross is a horse on the crest of a wave and is absolutely loving his racing," enthused Hugo.

"He was so angry after he finished second the time before that he came home trying to kick people and threw his rider off. When I asked if he was okay, he said: 'Just run the horse again as quickly as you can!'"

Nolton Cross could now head for the Queen's Cup, a £100,000 heritage handicap over 1m6f at Musselburgh on Saturday, April 8. Alternatively, Hugo is also contemplating stepping him up to two miles for the £150,000 Marathon on All-Weather Championships Finals Day at Newcastle on Good Friday, where he could come up against stablemate Solent Gateway.

Yard mourns loss of Jess

EVERYONE at Manor House Stables is devastated by the passing of Jess Whalley.

Jess, 25, who returned to the yard last summer having previously worked for Hugo in Newmarket, collapsed shortly after she had ridden work on Tuesday morning.

"As you can imagine, everyone here is broken," said Hugo. "Jess, pictured inset, was an extremely hard working, dedicated and well-liked member of the team and we will all miss her terribly."

"Of course, what has happened is unimaginably sad. However, I shall take some solace from the fact that Jess's last moments were spent aboard a filly who was very much her favourite and she absolutely adored."

"Jess had worked tirelessly with the filly and, as a result of all Jess's hard work, she was doing exceptionally well."

"What's more, the pair had just returned from a really exciting piece of fast work, which is something I know would have delighted Jess and provided her with an enormous amount of pleasure."

"Besides being such a huge part of the filly's life, Jess was a fantastic member of the team here."

"Sadly, all we can do now is get on with the job and look forward to the filly that Jess was involved with winning – and when she does it is going to be very special indeed."

● Next month's edition of Manor House Monthly will include an in-depth tribute to Jess.



Join Michael's club for just £95 a year



Rose Donnelly, left, and Pearly Star

THE revamped Michael Owen Racing Club is open for new members ahead of the start of the 2023 turf season.

"I want to give others the chance to experience the joy of owning a racehorse and the club will enable everyone to get involved in this wonderful industry for just £95 a year," enthused Michael.

There will be two horses sporting the club's colours during the 2023 season – the three-year-old fillies Pearly Star and Rose Donnelly, both of whom have been showing up well on

the gallops at MHS and are expected to be in action soon.

What is more, members can look forward to a host of benefits, including a digital welcome pack, regular updates, invitations to yard visits hosted by Michael and Hugo, and entry into a ballot for complementary owners & trainer badges, giving access to exclusive areas of the racecourse, every time one of the club's horses is in action.

● You can find out more about the Michael Owen Racing Club and how to join [here](#).

Gold Cup day event is a whole lot of fun

MANOR House welcomed owners old and new for its annual Boodles Cheltenham Gold Cup day extravaganza.

In between watching Galopin Des Champs claim victory in the day's big race and taking in the rest of the action from Prestbury Park, guests looked forward to the start

of the new flat season while enjoying something to eat and drink.

Our thanks go to Chester-based Horseradish for their fabulous food and service, and to Chester Bet for providing those wanting to put their knowledge of the form book to the test with an opportunity to do so.

Chester May Festival looming on horizon

WITH the Chester May Festival little more than a month away, if you haven't already bought your tickets, now is the time to act!

The three-day extravaganza will get under way with

Boodles May Festival City Day on Wednesday, May 10.

Tickets are still available for all three days, though availability is limited in some areas. Visit www.chester-races.com for more details.

Victoria a maiden no more after Wolves win

VICTORIA Falls shed her maiden tag with victory in a Wolverhampton handicap at the beginning of the month.

Andrea Atzeni was in the saddle as Derek Passant's four-year-old filly kept on strongly in the final stages of the 1m½f contest to boost her career earnings by almost £6,000.

While it was a first career vic-

tory for Victoria Falls, she wasn't winning out of turn, having shown promise previously. What is more, the daughter of Heeraat came agonisingly close to following up when returning to action at the same venue a fortnight later on March 18.

In a race restricted to jockeys who had ridden fewer than 30 winners in the previous calendar

year, 3lb claimer William Carver had Victoria Falls well positioned throughout.

In the front rank from the moment the stalls opened, Will drove his mount to the front of the seven-runner field inside the final half furlong, only to be headed by the strong-finishing Young Fire in the shadow of the post.

DUBAI WORLD CUP NIGHT



Flaming Rib working ahead of Saturday's Al Quoz Sprint

Rib is out of luck in Dubai Group 1

HAVING won a valuable contest in Qatar on his return to action, hopes were high for Flaming Rib going into the Group 1 Al Quoz Sprint on Dubai World Cup night.

Unfortunately, it wasn't to be for the four-year-old son of Ribchester, who finished down the field at Meydan at the end of last month.

Flaming Rib, who is owned by James Dale, Tom Dolan, James Dooley, and Michael Owen, broke sharply for Oisin Murphy before Mikael Barzalona's mount, Al Dasim, veered across his path inside the opening furlong, momentarily checking his momentum.

To compound the situation,

Flaming Rib was drawn 12 of 15 in a race in which runners occupying single-figure stalls went on to fill seven of the first eight places.

Despite all of this, Flaming Rib was beaten a total of just five and three-quarter lengths, up against some of the world's leading sprinters, and the feeling persists that in different circumstances he could at least have run into a place.

"I think the incident at the start was probably immaterial, and that the draw was more of a factor," reflected Hugo. "They come stand side in pretty much every sprint on that track, hence why Flaming Rib's price halved when he was drawn in stall 12

of 15. Unfortunately for us, on this occasion, the race developed on the opposite side of the track, which is very unusual.

"And while we were a bit disappointed that Flaming Rib didn't at least win the race on his side and finish fourth or fifth, Oisin came in with mud all over his face, which isn't something you expect to see in Dubai and may not have helped our cause."

The race was won by Shadwell's 33-1 shot Danyah, who was ridden by Dane O'Neil and trained by Musabbeh Al Mheiri. Australian raider The Astrologist was a head behind in second, with the favourite Al Suhail, in the blue silks of Godolphin, a further neck back in third.

Jaguar devotees enjoy MHS visit

Michael and members of the Jaguar Drivers Club



MANOR House Stables were delighted to welcome members of the Cheshire branch of the Jaguar Drivers Club to the yard.

The automobile aficionados began their visit in the owners' lounge, where they were greeted by Hugo and Michael, before enjoying a comprehensive tour of the yard, taking in the stables, swimming pool, and gallops.

Michael also showed the visitors one of the buildings which remains from his purchase of the



Some of the Jags at MHS

farm in 2004 and explained how the business has grown.

"Each of the areas we visited was more fascinating than the last," remarked one of the visitors. "We felt so privileged to see

the horses swimming and then cantering on the gallops.

"The stabling is so impressive, and it was good to see the care and attention lavished on the horses by the grooms who are so enthusiastic about their work.

Among the members who visited the yard were the Farrall family, who arrived in two very special Jags – one being a Swallow Jag, named after the side-car company started by 'Mr Jaguar' Sir William Lyons.

MEET THE TEAM

Barn leader Ray is a big fan of Pancake



Ray aboard Princess Niyla, aka Pancake

BARN leader Ray McCarthy joined Manor House in February 2020.

Prior to his move to MHS, Ray had worked as a travelling head lad for Richard Hannon, having previously been a conditional jockey with John Parkes.

One of Ray's most memorable moments in racing occurred during his time with John, when he rode his first winner aboard Salinger at Fakenham on St Patrick's Day in

1994. Another of his highlights came at Epsom in 2015 when Pethers Moon, who he looked after and rode every day, won the Group 1 Coronation Cup at Epsom.

Ray, whose favourite horse in the yard is Princess Niyla, otherwise known as Pancake, attributes his interest in racing to watching the sport on TV as a child. In his spare time, Ray enjoys playing golf and says he would jump at the to travel to the USA to watch the Masters.

HUGO PALMER

Let's hope our good start to the year can continue on the turf

I wrote back in January that I hoped we might be able to get 10 winners on the board before the turf season got under way and I'm delighted we've been able to realise that goal.

In actual fact, we're now into double figures on the all-weather here in the UK, while there's also the small matter of Flaming Rib's success in Qatar last month.

As you'll have read elsewhere in this edition of *Manor House Monthly*, the much-improved Noltan Cross has been a leading player in our success so far this year, with three victories to his name already and I'd like to think he might make that four at some stage this week.

With the flat season proper kicking off on Saturday, we'll be looking to continue our good run into the spring. It was with that in mind that we took eight horses for a racecourse gallop at Wolverhampton recently.

I've always thought these away days can be a really worthwhile exercise. Firstly, while a racecourse gallop needn't be too demanding, it's probably the equivalent of four or five



pieces of work at home. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to work half-a-dozen or more two-year-olds together, which is something we can't do on the gallops at MHS, and equips them with invaluable experience.

WHILE I had been hoping to have my first-ever runner in the Brocklesby on Saturday, my plans were scuppered by the weather, which saw the race run on heavy going.

I had earmarked The Bitter Moose for the first two-year-old race of the season, but he almost certainly wants better ground.

It was unfortunate we didn't get to see him at the weekend as he's a nicely bred son of Kodiak who's sharp, forward, and has been showing us nice things. He's owned by four of the six who

were involved in Mr McCann and I'd like to think they'll have plenty of fun with him this season.

While it's great the turf season is now under way, truth be told, it all goes a bit quiet for the next couple of weeks before exploding into life again with the Craven meeting at Newmarket.

In the meantime, there aren't a whole lot of places to go, so it will probably be a fairly quiet start for us over the next fortnight or so.

WITH the turf season up and running, you won't be surprised to hear I'm beginning to give some serious thought to this year's Chester May Festival.

As ever, it's a meeting everyone at Manor House and all our owners, especially those based in the North West, really looks forward to and, for sure, it's somewhere we very much want to be winning races.

Andrew Balding and I were jointly leading trainer at last year's May Festival and it would be great if I were able to finish out in front on my own this time around.

We should have a strong team, including course specialists such as Box To Box and Roman Dragon, along with Rajinsky and Zoffee, who are being aimed at the Chester Cup, while I'll be disappointed if we don't also have a few sharp two-year-olds ready to take their chances.



MHS teams up with Grosvenor Insurance

MANOR House Stables is delighted to partner with Grosvenor Insurance Brokers Limited for 2023.

Grosvenor Insurance are independently owned, dynamic insurance brokers, specializing in delivering tailored

insurance solutions that perfectly match their clients' requirements, including bespoke underwriting where necessary.

The team comprises of long-serving professionals with backgrounds in broking and underwriting for local and national brokers, as well as high street name insurers.

Grosvenor Insurance's managing director Andy Piggot said: "We are delighted to join forces with MHS and their connections, and are excited for the growth of the partnership over the coming months and years.

"We are looking forward to develop-

ing connections with the MHS family and working collaboratively with all stakeholders".

Director and Owner of Manor House Stables Michael Owen said:

"This year has seen a great step change in our com-

mercial relationship portfolio and we are looking forward to developing the relationship and partnership with Grosvenor Insurance. They provide a wealth of experience and expertise and we hope our existing and future owners and clients will benefit from all they have to offer."

If you're interested in finding out more, or getting in touch with Grosvenor about their services, please let us know.

● For more information click [here](#), alternatively, for partnership enquiries, please email harriet@manorhousestables.com or call the office on 01948 820485.

GROSVENOR
INSURANCE BROKERS



Q&A: Michael Moran has joined the ranks of owners at Manor House by virtue of his involvement in the two-year-old colt Watcha Matey

Michael has high hopes for Matey

What's your connection with Manor House Stables? I'm a part-owner of Watcha Matey, who is trained at MHS.

How did your association with the yard come about? Another member of the partnership which owns Watcha Matey, Craig Rowlands, is good friends with Michael Owen.

What, in your opinion, sets Manor House apart from other yards? It's very professional and has a family feel.

How do you know the others in the syndicate? We became good friends growing up.

How did Watcha Matey get his name? It's a phrase another of the partnership members, Keith Austin, has used throughout his life.

What are your hopes for Watcha Matey this season and beyond? That he progresses nicely in his first season and, if at all possible, goes on to compete on the biggest stage.

Sum yourself up in five words? Honest, kind, caring, spontaneous and fun.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Gerard Butler.

What was the last film you saw? The new Top Gun.

What was the last book you read? A biography of the boxer Frank Bruno.



Michael Moran

If you had to choose a single 'Desert Island Disc' what would it be? Tracy Chapman's Fast Car.
Who do you most admire and why? My wife, who sticks with me whether I'm right or wrong.
Who's your favourite-ever horse? The three-time Grand National winner Red Rum.
What's your favourite sport?

Either football or boxing.
What would be your specialist subject on Mastermind? Sport.
What's your guiltiest pleasure / greatest extravagance? Singing along to 80's music while driving.
What is the most-important lesson life has taught you? Never give up!

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FOR THE GOOD OF THE RACEHORSE



WE ARE PROUD TO BE AN OFFICIAL PARTNER OF MANOR HOUSE STABLES AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO BEING PART OF THE TEAM.

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