

MANOR HOUSE



MONTHLY



JULY 2023 | ISSUE No. 124



There has been plenty for Hugo to smile about over the last month

Winners aplenty for MHS in July

WITH seven winners on the board already, July has been one of Hugo's most productive months since taking the helm at Manor House Stables in the spring of 2022.

In a strange quirk of fate, six of those seven successes came courtesy of three doubles – beginning with a brace of winners at Chester on the very first day of the month.

Roman Dragon set the ball rolling when successful in a 6f sprint, before the three-year-old filly Princess Niyla landed a 7½f novice stakes on her first start of the year.

The former, who is owned by Nick Hughes and Michael Owen, was sent on by Hayley Turner half a mile out and kept on well for a fourth career victory and a first prize of more than £10,000.

And little more than an hour after Roman Dragon's success, Paul Hanagan

steered Princess Niyla to success in the red and white silks of Sustainable Building Services UK Ltd.

It was a first victory, at the third attempt, for the daughter on Night Of Thunder, who had finished a close-up third of 12 on her racecourse debut at Lingfield in November.

The yard's third and fourth winners of the month came exactly a week later when Tierney defied her odds of 28-1 to land a competitive Haydock nursery, before Order Of Malta and Callum Shepherd scored at Nottingham.

With Harry Davies in the saddle, Tierney made relentless progress in the final stages of the 6f contest to claim the £10,468 first prize for her owners the Gene Genies. The daughter of Mehmas was showing much-improved form to record her first victory on just her fourth start.

Likewise, Order Of Malta was also winning for the first time when taking a 1m2f classified stakes for Matt Batters, Derek Passant, and Michael Owen.

The yard's fifth and sixth winners of the month came on July 14 when Soldier's Gold won at Ascot and Golden Trick followed suit at Chester.

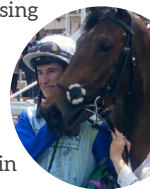
Having won a Carlisle novice stakes under Ben Curtis at the end of June, Soldiers Gold, whose owners include Liverpool players past and present, shouldered top weight to an impressive victory under Richard Kingscote in a 6f nursery, before the Bronte Collection's two-year-old colt took a 6f novice stakes under Hayley Turner.

And win number seven came last Tuesday when Al Asayl Bloodstock's three-year-old Fleur De Mer took a 1m½f Wolverhampton maiden with Harry Davies in the saddle.

Listed third for Chelsea

CHELSEA Green went close to giving Manor House its second overseas winner of 2023 when third in the Listed Prix Madame Jean Couturie at Vichy on July 20.

Chelsea Thoroughbreds' three-year-old kept on well under Ioritz Mendizabal in the final stages of the 1m2f contest, crossing the line just a length behind Zee-yara, with Godolphin's Wild Pansy in second.



It was a welcome return to form for the daughter of US Navy Flag, who had finished down the field in the Sandringham Stakes at Royal Ascot, having won on her seasonal debut at Newmarket.

Chelsea Green picked up more than £7,000 for her run in France, taking her earnings for 2023 past £20,000, while also securing some invaluable Black Type.

Solent sails past £50,000

SOLENT Gateway's fourth-place finish at Newbury earlier this month took his earnings for the season past the £50,000 mark.

The five-year-old son of Awtaad, who is owned by Derek Passant and Hefin Williams, led the 13-runner field for much of the 2m½Mettal UK Handicap. And while Ross Coakley's mount was headed halfway up the long Newbury straight, he stayed on gutsily to defy his 40-1 starting prize and claim a share of more than 70k.

Solent Gateway has won four of his 29 starts and boasts career earnings in excess of £110,000.

Date is set for this year's MHS golf day



Carden Park Hotel

THIS year's Manor House Stables Golf Day will take place on Tuesday, September 12, at Carden Park Hotel, near Chester.

The long-established event has always been one of the most popular in the yard's social calendar and this year's renewal promises to be no exception.

In addition to 18 holes of golf, the day will include: tea, coffee and bacon rolls; buggy hire; and a three-course dinner and entertainment in the evening.

A timeless embodiment of the great

game, Carden Park has two wonderful championship courses – one of which was designed by the legendary Jack Nicklaus – and golfing hotel facilities unsurpassed in the Chester region.

Entry is £650 plus VAT for a team of four, and if you'd like to join the fun but are short of teammates, MHS will happily put you together with others in the same position.

● For more information, or to enter a team, please call 01948 820485 or email harriet@manor-housestables.com.

HM3 Legal become commercial partners

AFTER a successful 12 months, HM3 Legal have upgraded their sponsorship to become commercial partners at MHS.

Moving forward, they will continue helping to build the MHS business, while having the opportunity to invite clients and staff to the yard's premier events.



HM3 Legal at MHS

● To find out more about the North-West-based legal services firm, who pride themselves on offering a 'wow' service, click [here](#).

Cameras at yard to capture new footage

YARD sponsors Coral paid a visit to Manor House on Wednesday of last week, along with crew from Equine Productions, to capture some new content for their racing club.

Over the course

of a bright, sunny morning, the Coral team caught up with Hugo and their two-year-old colt Cast No Shadow.

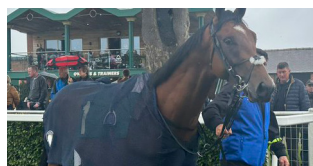
Keep your eyes peeled to social media for the new footage soon!

Cast No Shadow's jockey upbeat about future

CORAL Racing Club's juvenile colt Cast No Shadow performed with promise when making his racecourse debut at Ripon on the Saturday before last.

While the Ardad colt could only finish sixth of seven, his jockey, Paul Hanagan, was positive about his future prospects.

"I definitely think he'll be alright," said the former champion



Cast No Shadow

jockey, speaking to club members after the race. "He's got a great attitude, a great mind and

will have learnt a lot from his first day at school. And he would have finished a lot closer if he hadn't been drawn in [stall] one."

"On reflection, Cast No Shadow struggled a little with the track, but there weren't too many other options," said Hugo. "He's come out of the race really well and it won't be long before he's back in action."

MICHAEL OWEN RACING CLUB



Club members celebrate Pearly Star's Chester win

Star shines bright for club members

THE Michael Owen Racing Club celebrated its first success of the season when Pearly Star scored at Chester on the final day of June.

Under a power-packed ride from Andrew Mullen, the three-year-old filly mastered long-time leader Metahorse inside the final few yards of the 7½f contest, whilst at the same time withholding the late challenge of favourite Taralat.

It was a well-deserved success for the daughter of Zoustar, who had shown steady improvement since making her debut at Wolverhampton in April.

Pearly Star is one of two horses who will be representing the club in 2023, alongside Rose



Pearly Star in winning form

Donnelly, who is showing lots of similar traits to her half-sister Roman Dragon – a horse with whom MHS has enjoyed considerable success.

Membership of the Michael Owen Racing Club costs just £95 a year and it's not too late to get involved and follow the fortunes of Rose Donnelly and Pearly Star for the remainder of 2023.

"You couldn't get a better racing club," said Charles O'Kelly,

who was one of many club members at Chester to see Pearly Star finish sixth, beaten little more than three lengths, in a 7½f handicap on July 14.

"It's been a great experience today and it doesn't cost a fortune," enthused Charles. "I've enjoyed a wonderful day out and met some fantastic people – I've loved every minute!"

Club members receive a digital welcome pack, invitations to yard visits hosted by Michael and Hugo, and entry into a ballot for complementary owners & trainer badges 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](#).

Exciting times as big sales beckon

WITH this year's yearling sales getting under way with the Arqana sale at Deauville in August, Hugo and Michael are looking forward to unearthing some future stars.

"All trainers enjoy seeking out the next generation of talent and it's something I particularly relish," reflected Hugo.

"Arqana is a sale I've been really lucky at – I bought Home Of The Brave, The Rosstafarian and lots of other nice winners there in the past, while last year we bought Watcha Matey – who I'm sure is going to be winning races soon – for just €30,000.

"As ever, Michael and I will be on the lookout for something a bit special at Arqana, though, as you might imagine, that's no easy task when there are so many others seeking to do the same.

"It does have a reputation for being a very expensive sale. However, that can result in some people giving it a wide berth



Hugo and Michael are looking forward to the sales

and, outside of the very top end, I feel there's often an awful lot of value to be had.

"Over the course of the sales season, we'll be looking to buy all different types of horses, to suit all different types of budgets," continued Hugo.

"It's a source of pride that earlier this season we were responsible for the second two-year old

winner of the year, Balon D'Or, just a few days before Rajinsky, who's seven, won the Further Flight Stakes over 1m6f."

With that in mind, Hugo would love to hear from anyone interested in having a two-year-old in training at MHS next year and can be contacted on 01948 820485 or via hugo@manor-housestables.com.

MEET THE TEAM

Graeme would jump at trip to see Ashes



Graham aboard Imperial Ace

GRAEME Geddes joined MHS in May of last year. The Scotsman Graeme, who was born in Stirling, rides out and travels horses to the races.

Graeme has been interested in racing for as long as he can remember, having grown up watching it on the TV and was a huge fan of jockey Pat Eddery.

His favourite horse at MHS is the three-year-old gelding Imperial Ace, who scored twice on the all-weather ear-

lier this year, and returned to something like his best form at Ascot recently.

As befits someone born north of the border, Graeme is a keen golfer. He also enjoys playing pool and says that if he was offered an all-expenses-paid trip anywhere in the world, he'd go to Australia to watch an Ashes series. In the meantime, there's nothing he enjoys more than a fillet steak and chips, with pepper sauce and onion rings!

HUGO PALMER

Hoping a fantastic July can extend to a Glorious Goodwood

JULY has been a very good month for MHS with the horses coming into form with a vengeance. It's fantastic to have seven winners on the board already and if we can add one or two more over the next few days that will be even better.

We did endure a slightly frustrating spell midway through the month when pretty much every horse we ran seemed to finish second – at one point, in eight days between July 14 and July 21, we had eight runners-up from just 12 runners, which was pretty gruelling.

That said, some of those seconds were massive results. If, say, you have an exposed four-year-old handicapper who finishes second then more often than not that represents a great run. Conversely, when you just run into one with the younger horses it can be terribly frustrating, although we're uncovering some nice young talent, which is always good to see.

Looking forward to Goodwood next week, I'd like to think we'll have runners on most, if not all, of the five days. Brad The Brief, pictured



inset, is earmarked for the Lennox Stakes on Tuesday. On the same day, Soldier's Gold may go in the Vintage Stakes, although he could wait for Thursday's nursery, in which we might also be represented by Balon D'Or and Phone Tag.

In addition Hackman could go for the Molecomb on Wednesday, while Princess Niyla is a possible for one of the handicaps, as is Imperial Ace who may go for the final race on Saturday.

OVER recent weeks there's been lots of talk about the 'premierisation' of racing and that is something I wanted to touch on here.

I appreciate it's not straight-forward and getting it right will require a very fine balance, but, it seems clear to me, something needs to be done. Having had very few runners so far this

week, we'll be ridiculously busy over the next couple of days when we've got so many horses running all over the country.

We have four horse boxes at Manor House now, but, on days like these, it isn't enough. Then, come the beginning of next week, those horse boxes will be sitting there doing nothing.

It just doesn't make any sense to me. Surely, it can't be beyond the wits of man to have the lower-grade stuff at the start of the week and the better racing at the end!

WHILE Manor House will be taking part in the Racing League again this year, I must admit I'm not entirely sold on the current format.

There's no denying there's some fantastic prize money up for grabs, but I can't help feeling the team element, upon which the entire concept depends, doesn't quite work.

When the Racing League began I was in a team with fellow Newmarket-based trainers Tom Clover, Charlie Fellowes, and George Scott – we met up regularly to talk tactics, travelled to the races together, and it was a lot of fun.

Now I'm one of 15 trainers from across the UK representing The North so that element has almost entirely gone. What is more, while I wish it wasn't so, it's hard to avoid the conclusion the competition is yet to capture the imagination of the public as was hoped.



Having just celebrated his 50th birthday, Roman Dragon's part-owner Nick Hughes reflects on a life well lived and the huge satisfaction he's derived from owning horses at Manor House over a number of years

FROM the very beginning, my journey with Roman Dragon has been one of fate.

Lee Jones, who played football at Liverpool with Michael Owen, introduced me to Manor House back in 2010. Lee and I had gone to Yale College in Wrexham and hung out together as teenagers until he was signed by Wrexham.

Years later, when I bought half of Roman Dragon from Michael, he was looked after by Lee's lads, Cam and Josh. Talk about full circle!

I had so much early success at Manor House, especially with my good friends Steve Roberts, Mike Edwards and Dylan Jenkins. Quatuor won the Lily Agnes at Chester for us, while Roudee won an infamous race under Hayley Tuner and was also successful in the Ayr Silver Cup.

A few years later, Dylan and Mike went on to form Roudee Racing, at which point personal factors meant I no longer had any first-hand involvement in the sport.

Then I gave up my beloved red wine and started concentrating on our family importing business, which involved a lot of travel to Hong Kong. Michael was working a lot in China at that time and seemed to be on every flight I caught.

We used to chat racing all the time and agreed that at some point in the future we would buy a horse together. Back then, I was driving my mum's car, as I couldn't afford my own, so the pipe dream of owning another horse seemed some way off.

However, by 2020 my luck had turned around. I had gone three years sober, owned my own car, and then had a Lucky 15 come in with Betfred, so I called Michael and said let's go to the sales.

He rang me back within 20 minutes to say he had been breeding a horse out of Trixie Malone and ask whether I'd be interested in buying half of that. I transferred him the money 10 seconds later!

The way I see it, Michael's homebreds are the family's pride and joy – his wife Louise, and all their children love horses, as do his mum and dad, Janette and Terry. It seems to me horses benefit from a bit of extra attention and I've little doubt those in the Owen household are spoilt rotten – Brown Panther being a prime example.

For sure, if anyone visiting the yard goes to see Roman, he is the friendliest horse you're ever likely to meet and will always come for a cuddle.

In any case, Michael and I talked about our vision for Roman Dragon and, from day one, we agreed we'd target him at Chester with a view to having some fun. Truth be told, we were probably a little disappointed with his first run at the course when



Nick, centre, at Haydock Park recently with family, friends, and Frankie Dettori

Wrexham fan Nick is living the dream courtesy of Dragon

he could only finish fifth, albeit behind some decent horses, including I'm A Gambler. However, he went on to win twice as a two-year-old under Jane Elliot and Richard Kingscote.

Michael and I like to celebrate and there was one memorable night when the pair of us, as well as my sister Emma, our mates, and all of the stable staff were out in Bar Lounge and our bill was the equivalent of a month's training fees!

Then Tom [Dascombe] left MHS and Hugo came aboard. Both trainers have been absolute gentleman – they must be for putting up with me as an owner!

Roman Dragon enjoyed another fantastic victory at Chester last year, under a great ride from Pierre Louis-Jamin, taking his record at the course to three wins.

It was at the start of this season that Michael and I began thinking about trying for the record for the winning-most horse at Chester, which currently stands at six victories.

Both Roman Dragon and his

Manor House has been my life for a long time now and I have made some great friends

Nick Hughes
Owner at Manor House

stablemate Box To Box have fallen in love with the place and it is amazing the buzz we get when either, or both, are running there. I only hope this continues for years to come, as my son Oli loves going racing, as does my girlfriend Nicola and her son Freddie.



Perhaps our best day yet came earlier this year when who else but Hayley Turner was in the saddle as Roman Dragon notched up his fourth Chester success.

It's funny because Hayley is a big Notts County fan and I of, course, am a fan of Wrexham [the Red Dragons, hence the second part of Roman's name] who both returned to the Football League earlier this year. Suffice to say, we enjoyed a bit of banter over the course of the season.

Roman Dragon has helped me realise a lot of dreams – we even got Frankie Dettori to ride him in this his farewell season.

Looking ahead, we'd love to equal, or even surpass, those six Chester wins, but, regardless of how we fare with that, I'm so happy just to be a part of MHS again – there are some great stable staff and owners and I've made lots of friends for life.

The start of my racing journey was a dream and regardless of what happens from hereon in, the memories already created will live on forever!

Summer barbecue proves popular with owners

MANOR House was the location for a summer barbecue for owners and staff earlier in the month.

Fortunately, the sun shone for the extremely well attended event, which got under way with a number of horses being paraded in the yard, before food was served.

Locally based Maynards Farm Shop provided first-class cater-



Guests at the barbecue

ing to coincide with evening stables, while Hugo and Michael Owen caught up with MHS owners old and new.

Those in attendance also enjoyed mingling with members of the MHS team who were on hand throughout the course of the event.

"We enjoyed the most delicious hog roast and it was great to see the owners mixing with the team and, at the same time, let some key people know just how much they're appreciated," said Hugo.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

Stenton Glider could head Stateside in the autumn



Stenton Glider's USA dream alive

THE American Dream remains very much alive for Stenton Glider's enthusiastic owners despite their horse's narrow defeat in the Coral Distaff at Sandown earlier this month.

Sent off 5-2 favourite for the 1m Listed contest, the three-year-old filly was only headed inside the final 100 yards by eventual winner Mystic Pearl.

While Hugo was disappointed to see Stenton Glider finish second again, her performance was such that a trip to Keenland in October for the \$600,000 Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup Stakes is very much a possibility.

It's a race Hugo is no stranger to, having twice sent runners across the Atlantic, including

his German 1000 Guineas winner Hawksmoor who was only narrowly denied when finishing third in 2016.

"Stenton Glider ran really well but it is frustrating that she's still not a stakes winner," lamented Hugo after the Distaff. "She did very little wrong in defeat and from the draw I don't think Andrea Atzeni had a great deal of choice but to do what he did. It was frustrating that the winner came to her so late and she didn't have the time to fend her off."

"An adventure to the USA would be wonderful for her owners and I would be keen to finally win the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup Stakes, having gone so close in 2016."

Stenton Glider is owned by mother and son Jane and Tom Mairs and a trip to the States in October could work out very nicely for American football fan Tom, with the new NFL season getting under way on September 7.

In the meantime, having run just three times so far this season, Stenton Glider could warm up for her Stateside target in the Listed Dick Hern Stakes, over a mile, at Haydock, at the beginning of next month.

Purchased at Tattersalls for just £35,000 by SackvilleDonald, Stenton Glider is named after the famous bicycle used in the 1924 Paris Olympics, which was invented by Jane's grandfather.

Hugo in battle to be top Chester trainer



Hackman, right, winning at Chester

HUGO and Andrew Balding are locked together in the battle to be the leading trainer at Chester in 2023.

Twelve months after Hugo edged out his southern rival, courtesy of a better strike rate, the two trainers are again neck and neck at the top of the table.

In 2022 both stables had nine winners. However, Hugo sent out just 28 runners [a strike rate of 32%], while Andrew had 44 [20%].

And it's a very similar story this time around, with both Hugo and

Andrew having had six winners on the Roodee so far this year. Behind them, Charlie Johnston has had four, Aidan O'Brien three, and Dominic French Davis two.

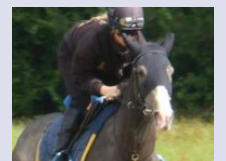
With six fixtures remaining this year, culminating with the Season Finale on October 14, it's very much all to play for.

No doubt Hugo will be keen to hang onto his crown and, with that in mind, course specialist Roman Dragon, who has already won at the track four times, could have a big part to play!

Fleur De Mer takes yard to 30 winners

FLEUR De Mer's victory at Wolverhampton on Tuesday was MHS's 30th UK winner this year.

With three victories to his name in 2023, Nolton Cross remains the yard's winning-most performer. A second successive victory for Soldier's Gold, who scored at Ascot in the middle of the



Fleur De Mer

month, means he is now one of three MHS inmates, along with Imperial Ace and Solent Gateway, who have been successful twice.

Finance company is a new yard sponsor

MHS has welcomed Empire Commercial Finance aboard as its latest yard sponsor.

A firm of specialist independent finance brokers, operated by staff with a wealth of business, commercial and private banking

lending experience, Emperor Commercial Finance provides exceptional service for clients in the UK and overseas.

● To learn more about Empire Commercial Finance click [here](#).



Jess Whalley's friends celebrating her life

MHS pay tribute to Jess at Chester

MEMBERS of the Manor House team turned out in force to celebrate the life of friend and colleague Jess Whalley, at Chester's evening meeting on June 30.

Jess, 25, was a hugely popular and valuable member of the MHS team, as well as the wider racing community, and her sudden passing earlier this year came as a huge shock.

Chester's seven-race

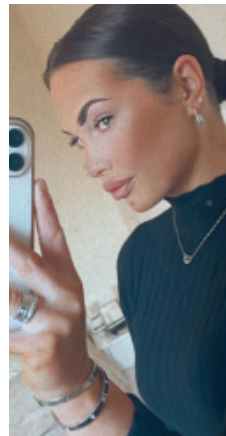
card concluded with a race sponsored by MHS in tribute to Jess, the Remembering Jess Whalley Handicap. And while the yard was without a runner in a race Hugo and Michael would have dearly loved to have won, the team had cause for cheer when Pearly Star took the 7½f handicap earlier on the card.

"Jess was a lovely girl who was a fantastic part of our team," reflected Hugo. "We miss

her like mad. It was fantastic we marked the night with a winner, although you don't win many 0-80 handicaps with 61-rated fillies.

"It felt like a miracle and it's the sort of thing that makes you believe in something, I think."

● MHS has set up a fundraising page for CRY [Cardiac Risk in the Young], which works to prevent young sudden cardiac deaths and support those affected. You can donate [here](#).



Jess Whalley

MHS horses set for 2023 Racing League



Jockeys participating in the Racing League

MANOR House is set to participate in the 2023 Racing League.

This year's competition, which kicked off at Yarmouth last Thursday, sees seven teams – Ireland, London and the South, Scotland, The East, The North, Wales and The West, and Yorkshire – compete in 42 races over six meetings for more than £2m in prize money.

In addition to the competition for the winning team, there is also a prize for the

leading jockey over the course of the six meetings.

Having been part of the Scotland team in 2022, this year Hugo is one of the trainers whose horses will be accumulating points for The North.

The North's team, comprising 15 trainers and eight jockeys, will be overseen by former footballer Mick Quinn, who was himself a successful trainer before relinquishing his licence in 2022.

Michael supports charity fundraiser

MICHAEL Owen has lent his support to the cancer charity Macmillan.

A guest of honour at a fundraising event at Haydock Park, Michael drew the winning tickets in a champagne

raffle which raised more than £30,000 for the charity.

"Michael's presence alone meant a lot to everyone in the room," reflected Macmillan's senior relationship manager Nicole McIlveen.

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