

MANOR HOUSE



MONTHLY



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Kindest Nation, foreground, and Oisín Murphy score at Southwell

Yard continues in rich vein of form

A FURTHER five victories in March have seen Manor House Stables race to the 18-winner mark for 2024.

As detailed in the previous edition of *Manor House Monthly*, Cast No Shadow scored at Newcastle on March 1, while Zivanyia was successful at Kempton 24 hours later.

Since then, How Impressive won at Southwell on March 10, Kindest Nation was successful at the same venue on March 26, and Zivanyia went in at Kempton the following day.

Oisín Murphy was in the saddle for How Impressive's latest success in a valuable 7f handicap. It was the Middle-



How Impressive's Southwell success

ham Park Racing [MPR] gelding's third victory in little more than a month. More remarkably still, MPR's four horses at MHS have now won seven races in 2024.

Oisín was also in the saddle for Kindest Nation's success in a 7f restricted

maiden stakes at the Nottinghamshire venue.

Having showed distinct promise on her racecourse debut at the beginning of March, the three-year-old filly, who is owned by John Brown and the Owen family, saw off her nine rivals with something to spare.

And the yard's final winner of another productive month came at Kempton last Wednesday when Zivanyia followed up his victory at the same venue some three weeks earlier.

Again, Oisín was in the saddle as Tony Shawe's four-year-old gelding stayed on best of all in the straight to see off his eight opponents.

MHS is off to a flying start

MANOR House is enjoying one of its best-ever starts to a year.

As of the end of March, the yard had been responsible for 17 winners in the UK, while Roman Dragon, inset, won a valuable handicap in Bahrain at the beginning of February, and has been operating at a strike rate of almost 25 per cent.

At this stage last year, MHS had sent out seven fewer domestic winners. Moreover, the yard has easily surpassed its previous best total for the first quarter of the year, which was the 13 winners it recorded back in 2009.

The yard's most productive year numerically was 2012 when it amassed 79 winners. However, with 18 winners on the board already, Hugo will have that total firmly within his sights.

Breeze-ups imminent

WITH this year's breeze-up sales about to get under way, now is an opportune time to contact MHS if you're interested in having a two-year-old in training at the yard.

The 2024 Tattersalls Craven Breeze-Up Sale will take place at Newmarket from April 15-17. This is where many consignors like to send their best prospects so there are certain to be lots of exciting youngsters breezing.

● If you are interested in acquiring a breeze-up horse, please email info@manor-housestables.com, alternatively call the yard on 01948 820485.



Michael and friends enjoy a trip to Dubai



Michael and pals from MHS in Dubai

MICHAEL Owen and a number of owners at Manor House enjoyed an action-packed trip to Dubai to coincide with the pinnacle of the 2024 UAE season.

The group enjoyed a boat trip and a tour of Godolphin's Marmoom Stables, before attending the 2024 Dubai World Cup at Meydan on Saturday.

The undoubted highlight of a stellar eight-race card was Laurel River's emphatic eight and a half length victory in the Dubai World Cup for local trainer Bhupat Seemar and

veteran Irish jockey Tadhg O'Shea. In addition, there were also two home victories to cheer, with Tower Of London taking the Dubai Gold Cup for Aidan O'Brien and Ryan Moore, while Charlie Appleby and William Buick teamed up to take the Dubai Sheema Classic with Rebel's Romance.

Having already organised a trip to Coolmore Stud this year, MHS is looking forward to putting on more fantastic trips over the coming months. Watch this space for more details!

Jess is remembered with huge affection

LAST Thursday [March 28] marked a year since the sad passing of Jess Whalley.

Jess is remembered with huge affection by her many friends at the yard. To this end, a young tree, marked with a plaque, has been planted at the yard in memory of Jess.

"Jess is sorely



Jess's plaque at MHS missed by everyone who knew her and it's great that we now have a tree to remember her in perpetuity," reflected Hugo.

Andrew's homebred filly set for Oaks trial

ANDREW Black's Kitteridge is set to make her next appearance in an Oaks trial.

The homebred daughter of Camelot won a Newcastle maiden in February, having finished a

promising second on her racecourse debut at Chelmsford a month earlier.

"All the usual Oaks trials, including those at Chester, Lingfield and York, are under consideration at this stage," said Hugo.

Gold Cup day extravaganza proves huge success

MANOR House's annual Cheltenham Gold Cup Day extravaganza once again proved a huge success.

The popular event, which is always a highlight of the yard's social calendar, was extremely well attended with spirits high throughout the day.

A tour of the yard and gallops was followed by a drinks



The God Cup day event at MHS

reception and lunch before the racing got under way with the JCB Triumph Hurdle, some

two hours before those present watched on as the brilliant Galopin Des Champs made it back-to-back victories in the Festival's Blue Riband event.

A tipping contest which took place during the course of the afternoon was won by Russell Johnyson, who was presented with a bottle of Macallan 15 whisky by Michael Owen.

Chris and Hugo filming some footage for Coral Racing Club



Chris visits yard to film for Coral

CORAL ambassador Chris Hughes paid a visit to Manor House Stables last month.

Chris was at the yard to record some exclusive video footage for followers of the Coral Racing Club, which has two horses in training at MHS

Having sprung to fame as a contestant in the third series of the ITV reality show *Love Island*, Chris has gone on to forge a successful media career, which has seen him appear regularly on ITV Racing while he also fronts the BBC's coverage of The Hundred cricket tournament.

In the footage, which can now be viewed across Coral's social media channels, Hugo picks out four MHS horses to follow for the coming year. They are:

- An unnamed Pinatubo two-



Hugo and Chris on the gallops

year-old out of Miss Latin, who impressed Oisín Murphy when he worked at Wolverhampton last month.

- Al Asayl Bloodstock's promising three-year-old Under The Sun, who broke his maiden at Salisbury in September.

- Chasmore Farm's homebred filly Kitteridge, who won at Newcastle in February and has been entered for the Oaks at Epsom in May.

- The five-year-old LAstronome, who joined MHS in the autumn,

having won a French Group 2 for his previous trainer Francis-Henri Graffard.

Hugo trained his first winner for the Coral Racing Club when the three-year-old Cast No Shadow scored at Newcastle at the beginning of last month.

In addition to Cast No Shadow, MHS has welcomed a second Coral Racing Club horse to its ranks this year - an as-yet-unnamed Soldier's Call two-year-old.

Coral have been yard sponsors since June of last year. The yards' partnership with the bookmakers sees Hugo provide Coral customers with unique insight into MHS runners, while the team wear Coral-branded clothing and the horses sport Coral branding at home and on the track.

MORE than a dozen MHS inmates made the near 50-mile journey to Wolverhampton for a racecourse gallop at the end of last month.

While the logistics of transporting so many horses, as well as several staff members, across country are not straightforward, Hugo feels the potential benefits of such an exercise more than warrant the efforts involved.

"It's just good to get them away - I've always felt a racecourse gallop is the equivalent of about four gallops at home," explained Hugo.

"We take horses of all ages. They can sometimes get a little bit complacent and I think it's beneficial for them to work somewhere different from time to time - a change in surroundings can help them to focus that bit better.

"It goes without saying, we are extremely grateful to the jockeys that came along to help us out - in this instance, former champion jockey Oisin Murphy, Billy Loughnane, Harry Davies, and Ross Coakley - and provided some invaluable feedback."

Such was the success of last month's exercise, Hugo envisages repeating it at least once if not twice more over the course of the next month or so.

Of course, the Black Country venue has long been a happy



Some of the horses who made the trip to Wolverhampton

Hugo takes team for an away day

hunting ground for the yard. Hugo had 11 winners at the track in 2023 - at a strike rate of almost 20 per cent - and has added three more, from just 15 runners, thus far this year.

● You can watch the MHS inmates being put through their paces on the all-weather track at Dunstall Park in video footage shared across the yard's various social media channels.

MEET THE TEAM

Hardworking Laura joins the MHS team



Laura aboard Double Mocha

LAURA Richardson joined Manor House as a part-time rider in December of last year.

Prior to this, Laura, who hails from the Welsh village of Meifod, combined working for Shropshire-based jumps trainer Alastair Ralph with training a string of point-to-pointers, which she continues to do today. Indeed, Laura attributes her interest in racing to having grown up riding out pointers.

Asked to choose her favourite horse

at MHS, Laura plumps for the as-yet-unraced two-year-old Arabian Cobra who is owned by Spencer Jones and Maurice McCarthy.

Laura says her perfect meal would be steak followed by a jam pudding, and if she was offered an all-expenses-paid trip anywhere in the world, she would opt for Maryland, the home of jumps racing in the USA, where she would relish the opportunity to ride out.

HUGO PALMER

More work needed to heighten racing's appeal to the public

IT'S hard to argue with the assertion of my fellow trainer Karl Burke that the start of the turf season would benefit from a radical overhaul.

The Middleham trainer expressed the view that there's little point in the turf campaign starting as early as was the case this year, only to be followed by a lull in the way of any meaningful action until well into April.

Rather, Karl argued that the Lincoln should take place on the Saturday immediately preceding the Craven meeting at Newmarket in order to create 'a real fanfare' and it seems to me his suggestion is not without merit.

And never mind when the turf season does or doesn't get under way, I remain to be convinced that there are any great benefits to be gleaned from the 'Premierisation' of the fixture list. Indeed, I can't help thinking that it's a bit of a nonsense - it might seem like a good idea on paper but I'm not sure it makes a jot of difference to Joe Public.

As I see it, the one thing that's pretty much



guaranteed to attract bigger crowds is better quality racing - at the moment there's simply too much mediocre fare, which only serves as a distraction - and, unfortunately, awarding a meeting Premier status and adding a bit of colour to the card on the *Racing Post* website is unlikely to change that!

WHILE the Chester May Festival is hugely important to MHS, it's not the focus of my attentions quite yet though, as you might envisage, that situation will change dramatically over the course of the next few weeks.

Be that as it may, I haven't yet got as far as making a list of horses for specific races, although we have earmarked three, possibly four, for the Chester Cup. Zoffee, who's returned

to MHS having run twice over hurdles for Olly Murphy, will attempt to go one better than last year, when he finished second behind Me-tier, while L'Astronome and Rajinsky are also likely runners. And Zivanyia, who's won twice already in 2024, will also get an entry.

Elsewhere, Kitteridge, left, is a possible for the Oaks trial, while we'll also look to find races for course specialists Box To Box and Roman Dragon and, touch wood, will have plenty more runners over the course of the three days.

I'm delighted to have got 18 winners on the board in the first three months of 2024. It's seven more than we had at the same stage last year and, while I don't give a great deal of thought to what went on at MHS before my arrival, it's pleasing to learn that it's surpassed the 13 winners the yard had in the first three months of 2013.

I'm loath to set too many targets as you're invariably disappointed - when we made such a great start to the year, I dared to dream we might reach the 20-winner mark before the start of the turf season but, alas, we came up just short.

That said, the goal has to be to improve year on year so, with that in mind, we must be looking to better the 59 winners and £1.3 million in prize money we amassed last year.



Q&A: John Brown owns Northern Choice and recent Southwell winner Kindest Nation. Having travelled all over the world, owner-breeder John, who bred Iconic Choice to finish seventh in the 2019 1000 Guineas, has had horses at MHS for more than 10 years

John's a huge fan of all things MHS

What's your connection with Manor House Stables? Owner of horses in training with Hugo, as well as [I hope] a friend of the Owen family.

What are your hopes for this season and beyond? I want my horses, especially the home-bred ones, to run to the best of their ability – winning is great but not everything.

How did your association with the yard come about? When Tom Dascombe moved from Lambourn to MHS in November 2009, I and my horses, Diapason and Adorable Choice, moved with him.

What, in your opinion, sets Manor House apart from other yards? Of course, the facilities at MHS are excellent, but it is the people which makes MHS great!
Sum yourself up in five words. A person fully enjoying later life.

Who would play you in a film of your life? No-one would be stupid enough to do this – they would get jet lag!!

What was the last film you saw? I have absolutely no idea – it was years and years ago.

What was the last book you read? *The Railway Detective's*



John, Oisín Murphy, and Lydia after Kindest Nation's Southwell success

Christmas Case by Edward Marston.

Who's your favourite-ever horse? Adorable Choice, who is now, sadly, deceased.

Who do you most admire and why? The late Queen Elizabeth II – in my view, the most wonderful and remarkable woman that has ever lived.

What would be your specialist subject on Mastermind? I would never be daft enough to go on *Mastermind*!

What is your favourite sport? Horse racing, of course!

What's your guiltiest pleasure / greatest extravagance? Horses, obviously!

What is the most-important lesson life has taught you?

If you don't ask you don't get, but always be polite, however, annoyed you might be.

And finally, what's your guiltiest pleasure? That would be drinking red wine whilst eating chocolate.

Big day out at Donny for members of club



Club members in the paddock at Doncaster

MICHAEL Owen Racing Club members enjoyed an exciting start to the turf season with He's A Gentleman running in the valuable Lincoln consolation race at Doncaster.

While the five-year-old was out of luck on the day, his participation in the 70k contest ensured a day to remember for all those present.

In addition to He's A Gentleman, who has scored twice since being recruited last September, the

club's blue and silver silks will also be carried by the three-year-old filly Rose Donnelly, who made her racecourse debut last month.

It costs just £95 a year to join the club with benefits including a digital welcome pack, invitations to yard visits, and entry into a ballot for complementary owners & trainer badges every time the club has a runner.

● Find out more about the racing club and how to join [here](#).

Opportunity to join Manor House team

MANOR House Stables has a vacancy for a racing secretary.

A positive, self-motivated individual is sought to undertake the administrative duties associated with a busy racing

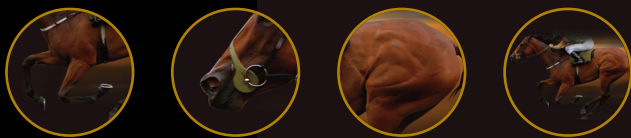
office. These will include liaising with other members of the MHS team, as well as owners, and racecourses.

● Email info@manor-housetables.com or call 01948 820485 for further details.

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