

MANOR HOUSE



MONTHLY



APRIL 2024 | ISSUE No. 133



Watcha Matey and connections after his victory at Newmarket

MHS bags double at Craven meeting

A DOUBLE at Newmarket's Craven meeting was the highlight of another fruitful month for Manor House Stables in April.

Watcha Matey set the ball rolling when pulling off a 33-1 shock in the 1m JRA Handicap on the first day of the three-day fixture, before It Ain't Two defied odds of 16-1 to score on her racecourse debut in a maiden fillies' stakes 24 hours later.

Watcha Matey was winning at HQ for the second time, having landed a 7f novice stakes over the July course back in August. On this occasion, Jason Hart was in the saddle as the three-year-old gelding, who is owned by Messrs



It Ain't Two in the winner's enclosure

Austin, Moran, Rowlands, and McCallum, was sent on a quarter of a mile from home and stayed on well to score convincingly, with two and a quarter lengths back to the closest of his 12 pursuers, The Camden Colt.

The son of Land Force, who has won

two of his eight starts and been placed on four further occasions, has now amassed more than £20,000 in prize money.

A daughter of Calyx, It Ain't Too was successful in the yellow and blue silks of her owner-breeder Michael Owen and Ms Diamond.

Despite becoming a little unbalanced in the dip, Ross Coakley's mount showed a likeable attitude, keeping on well in the final half furlong to repel the two-pronged challenge of Amestris and Magic Mild.

It Ain't Two bagged a first prize of more than £12,000 for seeing off her 12 rivals in the 5f contest.

Al Asayl colt is close fifth

UNDER The Sun, inset, performed with credit when finishing fifth in the Group 3 bet365 Classic Trial at Sandown last Friday.

Al Asayl Bloodstock's talented three-year-old raced in second, behind the eventual winner Arabian Crown, for the majority of the 1m2f contest, but lost three places inside the final quarter of a mile. Oisín Murphy's mount was eventually beaten four and three quarter lengths, missing out on some black type by less than a length.



Another of Al Asayl's flagbearers, L'Astronome, returned to action in a valuable Newbury handicap earlier in the month. Stepped up in trip to 2m½f the son of Frankel ran encouragingly before tiring in the closing stages and could now go for the Ormonde at Chester next week.

Racecourse gallop for 16

SIXTEEN horses from MHS enjoyed a racecourse gallop at Wolverhampton last week.

It was the second time in as many months that Hugo has taken a group of horses on the 50-mile journey to Dunstall Park.

"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.

MHS was extremely grateful to jockeys Oisín Murphy, Jason Hart, Harry Davies, and Ross Coakley who kindly came along to put the horses through their paces.

Perfect time to sign up for racing club



Club members enjoy a day at the races

WITH the turf season getting into full swing, there's no better time to become a member of the Michael Owen Racing Club.

The club's blue and silver silks will be carried in 2024 by He's A Gentleman, who has scored twice since being recruited last September, and the four-year-old filly Rose Donnelly, who produced her best performance yet when finishing fourth in a Kempton maiden 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 complimentary owners & trainer badges every time the club has a runner.

"I truly recommend it," enthused club member Peter. "Some of the best days I've had on a racecourse have been with the club, and many of the members have now become friends.

"If you've got a spare £95 just do it - it will be the best money you've ever spent!"

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

Guests of travel firm enjoy a tour of MHS

CLIENTS of Inspiring Travel enjoyed a visit to Manor House Stables last month.

Guests of the Chester-based experts in tailor-made travel were given a tour of the yard by Hugo and Michael, after which they enjoyed canapes and champagne in the owners' lounge, before a Q&A session



The visiting party with Michael.

Inspiring Travel has been the preferred travel partner of Manor House Stables, since November of last year.

Opportunity knocks to acquire a juvenile

WITH this year's breeze-up sales 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.

Hugo was at this

week's Tattersalls sale at Newmarket and will be at all the major breeze-up sales from hereon in.

● *Email info@manor-housestables.com, or call the yard on 01948 820485, for more information.*

Yard welcomes supporters of St Luke's Hospice

MANOR HOUSE Stables was delighted to welcome a party of supporters from St Luke's Hospice on the morning of Tuesday, April 16.

St Luke's visitors enjoyed a guided tour of the yard, during which they saw the horses in their state-of-the-art barns, as well as being put through their paces on the gallops.



The St Luke's Hospice visit

The visit concluded with coffee and cake, as well as a raffle, in the MHS owners' lounge.

The annual event raises vital funds for the hospice, which offers a wide range of services to support people living with life-limiting illnesses in mid and south Cheshire.

"Huge thanks goes to Manor House Stables for their continued support - we really do appreciate it," said a spokesperson for St Luke's.



Oisín and Becca with Havanarama after his recent Wolverhampton win

Horses continue in excellent form

APRIL brought five more winners for Manor House Stables to take the yard's total for 2024 onto 23 [22 in the UK and one in Bahrain].

Auric provided the yard with its first winner of the month when scoring in a 6f novice stakes at Kempton on April 6.

Having made an encouraging debut when finishing fourth at Wolverhampton in March, the Havana Gold three-year-old prevailed by a head under Oisín Murphy.

The victory netted more than £10,000 for owners Manor House Stables Syndicate II, whose coffers received a further boost when Auric finished second in a 6f contest at Windsor on April 22.

While Auric was forced to dig deep to win at Kempton. Grey



Grey Cuban at Wolverhampton

Cuban's victory at Wolverhampton seven days later was altogether more emphatic.

Hollie Doyle bounced the grey gelding out of the stalls and he went clear two furlongs out to come home eight lengths to the good over runner-up Local Hero.

While it was a first victory, at the sixth attempt, for Grey Cuban, the son of Havana Grey wasn't winning out of turn, having been placed on three of his five starts as a juvenile.

As detailed on Page One, the

yard's third and fourth winners of the month came courtesy of victories for Watcha Matey and It Ain't Two at Newmarket's Craven meeting.

And the yard bagged its fifth winner of another productive month when Havanarama returned to winning ways in a 1m½f handicap at Wolverhampton on Saturday evening.

Oisín was in the saddle as the bay gelding, who is owned by Michael Owen and Tony Ford, bagged his second victory since the turn of the year.

Sent off the 2-1 favourite, Havanarama was always well positioned and kept on well inside the final furlong to see off Twirl'er by half a length.

Another son of Havana Grey, Havanarama has now earned almost 15k in 2024.

EXCITEMENT is mounting ahead of one of the biggest weeks of the year in the MHS calendar.

The Boodles May Festival gets under way at Chester next Wednesday [May 8] and Hugo expects the yard to be well represented on all three days.

"As things stand, we could have runners in pretty much everything except, perhaps, the two Classic trials and the Chester Cup consolation race," said Hugo.

"I guess our No. 1 hope for the week has to be Zoffee in the big race next Friday. He finished second in last year's Chester Cup, when he was beaten just a neck, and runs off a 3lbs lower mark this time around.

"Truth be told, it was a struggle even to get him to the race last year. However, I couldn't be more happy with him right now. Assuming he makes the cut, I'd like to think he could go very, very close."

Hugo will also be looking to five-times course-winner Roman Dragon and Box To Box, who has won four races at Chester, to put in big performances.

One horse who is unlikely to be seen on the Roodee next week is recent Newmarket scorer It Ain't Two.

"She's only small and would have to shoulder a 5lbs penalty in the Lily Agnes so I think it's altogether more likely we'll wait



Zoffee will be hoping to go one better in this year's Chester Cup

Hopes high as Chester looms large

for the Marygate at York the following week," said Hugo.

In the meantime, Hugo will be keeping his fingers crossed that it stays relatively dry and the meeting doesn't take place on

the desperate ground that prevailed last year. In addition, with track position oh so important at Chester, he'll be hoping Manor House's runners are blessed with some decent draws!

Join MHS's top team for pre-racing drinks



The MHS duo will be at Upstairs at the Grill

WHILE MHS is hoping for a successful week on the track at the Boodles May Festival, there's sure to be plenty of fun had off it!

And if you're planning on being at Chester next Friday for the big race of the week, the Chester Cup, then Hugo and Michael would be delighted if you were to join them at Upstairs at the Grill, for drinks before racing [11.30am-1pm].

"The May Festival is one of the biggest weeks of the entire year for Manor

House and it's almost as much about the social side of things as the racing," said Michael, who is very much looking forward to catching up with friends old and new.

Situated at 70 Watergate Street, Upstairs at the Grill is located just a few minutes' walk from the racecourse in one of Chester's most iconic buildings, and is renowned for classic cocktails, fine wine and unparalleled service in elegant and relaxed surroundings.

HUGO PALMER

Strike rate in excess of 20 per cent must be a cause for cheer

IT goes without saying, strike rate isn't everything – far from it. Nevertheless, the fact remains that almost one in four of the horses MHS has sent to the races thus far in 2024 has been successful [21 winners from 92 runners, as of the end of April] and that must be a cause for cheer.

All said and done, how many winners we have at the end of the year is what will define our season. At the same time, I think it's fair to say that a strike rate of almost 23 per cent, having sent out close to 100 runners, has to be extremely pleasing.

Sadly, it's nigh on inevitable that at some point over the next eight months that strike rate will slip a little. Be that as it may, we've made a fantastic start to the campaign and given ourselves some extremely solid foundations on which to build.

With 60-odd two-year-olds in the yard this year, the juveniles will play a big part in determining our fortunes, so I hope I'm right in thinking they're the nicest group of youngsters



we've had for some time. And while we'd have less fast, five-furlong types, who are ready early, than we've had in previous years, I'd like to think we've got some really nice young horses to look forward to later on in the year.

WE were delighted to have two winners at Newmarket's Craven meeting last month; while the yard has been going well for some time now, it's always good to get on the scoresheet at bigger meetings such as this.

Moreover, It Ain't Two's victory in a valuable maiden fillies' stakes wasn't really expected. She'd been going okay at home, but we've plenty of two-year-olds who've been showing up better.

Conversely, while Watcha Matey was sent

off at 33-1, we've always thought a lot of him and, while he got a great ride from Jason Hart, he won decisively and I don't think there was any fluke about it.

Certainly, if you'd told me at the beginning of last year that come the end of the season he would have won one race and be rated 79 I would have been disappointed. Touch wood, he can kick on from here with the Britannia Stakes at Royal Ascot a possible target.

WHILE I've been a vocal critic of a few of the initiatives the BHA have undertaken over recent years, their HorsePWR campaign, inset, has my full support.

Designed to heighten knowledge of the industry, HorsePWR's digital hub, which can be found [here](#), is packed with facts about the sport and, in particular, the high welfare and safety standards that underpin British racing.

All sports involving animals depend on a social licence and, with that in mind, it seems to me that his is just what racing needs. Its equine participants enjoy a life of luxury, in which they want for nothing, and it's imperative we heighten awareness of this amongst the public at large. Of course, there will still be one or two who take issue with the sport but initiatives such as HorsePWR can go a long way to ensuring they remain in the minority.



Q&A: Having tasted success with Hugo when he was in Newmarket, Spencer Hickman has joined the Manor House Stables Syndicate

Spencer's back on board with Hugo

What's your connection with Manor House Stables? I had horses with Hugo when he was based at Kremlin Cottage in Newmarket.

What are your hopes for this season and beyond? Hopefully, winning some nice handicaps with Cheshire Dancer and Cheshire Belle.

How did your association with the yard come about? Hugo and Michael arranged it.

What, in your opinion, sets Manor House apart from other yards? The gallops are exceptional and the welfare of the horses is second to none.

Sum yourself up in five words. Caring, level-headed, sociable, thoughtful winner.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Cricketer Ian Botham who, like myself, also played football and liked a beer!
What was the last film you saw? *Hot Fuzz*.

What was the last book you read? *Botham's Ashes*.

If you had to choose a single 'Desert Island Disc' what would it be? *Insomnia* by Faithless.

Who's your favourite-ever horse? I was part of a syndicate which owned Hariboux, who Hugo trained to win three races in five starts when he was based in Newmarket.

Spencer, far left, after Cheshire Dancer scored at Beverley



Who do you most admire and why? Ben Stokes - the best all-rounder since Botham.

What would be your specialist subject on Mastermind? Cricket.
What is your favourite sport? Again, cricket.

What is the most-important lesson life has taught you? Never give up - you can make things happen [as a racehorse owner] with a syndicate!
And finally, what's your guilty-est pleasure? Chocolate.

MEET THE TEAM

Stef's move to MHS a return to her roots



Stefanie Parry joined MHS in 2023

STEFANIE Parry joined the team at Manor House in May of last year.

Born not a million miles from the yard in the Welsh village of Bethesda, Stef worked for former Newmarket trainer Martin Smith before her move to MHS.

She attributes her interest in racing to her mother working in the sport, and having had her own horses while she was growing up.

Asked to pick a favourite horse at MHS, Stef plumps for David Howden's four-year-old Running Star, who was placed on all three of his racecourse appearances in 2023.

In her spare time, Stef enjoys going to the races with her friends, as well as walking and socialising. She's a big fan of Indian cuisine and says her dream holiday would involve a trip to New Zealand.

Opportunities to join Manor House team

MANOR House Stables is recruiting for a variety of roles.

The yard has vacancies for an experienced travelling member of staff, as well as full-time riders and yard staff.

The successful ap-

plicant for the travelling staff role will have the opportunity to travel overseas and benefit from a generous package.

• Email info@manor-housestables.com or call 01948 820485 for further details.

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