



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING and Management



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The ability for our sport to provide premium facilities for our trainers impacts most key performance parameters. Horse and human safety and welfare, equine performance, trainer's business viability and lifestyle are all directly related to the standard of training facilities provided.

As Ballarat Turf Club celebrates its \$500,000 Cup this weekend, the club's reputation as a great place to train continues to grow. The gap left by Darren Weir was quickly filled. Last year among the top 20 trainers in Victoria, only Flemington (5) housed more than Ballarat (4).

This year with the relocation of the McEvoy stable, and no doubt other trainers, the 2021/2022 season could well see Ballarat as the most successful training facility in the state – at least by trainer rankings.

In the broader sense, Ballarat has great similarities to the two great equine centres of Chantilly and Newmarket. It's rural, but not too far from Melbourne. It's within 150 kms of most of the major country tracks. It is spacious with an abundance of land for development. It's an environmentally friendly location for both horses and people. Perhaps, most importantly, Ballarat is a horse racing town. The local council acknowledges the importance of racing to the community and the local economy.

With its existing infrastructure, Ballarat's training facilities will quickly become congested if sufficient resources are not provided for growth. Racing Victoria is wise to continue to work closely with the Club to enable it to be regarded as Victoria's premium training location within the next five years.

OTI NEWS

Runners in four states around Australia this weekend.

Tomorrow at Ascot, WA

GAILO CHOP runs in R8 GR1 Railway Stakes over 1600m for Matthew Williams and with Brad Rawiller riding from barrier 20. The three-time Group 1 winner has enjoyed a five-week freshen up and we expect him to be competitive.

Tomorrow at Ballarat, VIC

INVERLOCH runs in the feature race R8 Listed Ballarat Cup over 2000m for Trent Busuttin and Natalie Young with Daniel Stackhouse riding from barrier 5. Well in the weights, we hope to see him make an improved run.

Tomorrow at Kembla Grange, NSW

SOUND OF CANNONS runs in R3 BM78 2000m for John O'Shea and Tommy Berry from barrier 18. Racing for the second time since his arrival in Australia, he continues to thrive and this run will bring him on.

Tomorrow at Sunshine Coast, QLD

LE JUGE runs in R8 1600m Mooloolaba Cup for Chris Waller and Luke Dittman from barrier 15. A competitive race, he will improve for the run being first up this prep.

On Sunday at Kilmore, VIC

DOROZA runs in R4 2000m BM64 for Matt Cumani and Fred Kersley from barrier 9. He is in really good shape going into the race after his run at Flemington two weeks ago.

On Sunday at Quirindi, NSW

AU PAIR runs in R2 1450m for Will Freedman and Ben Looker from barrier 7. She is doing really well, and she will have a good chance of claiming victory.

Next week

Nominations for **SLEEPLESS** at Sandown, **ATYPICAL** at Pakenham, **SEIXAS** at Chelmsford, **I AM READY** at Cranbourne and **MONTABOT** at St. Cloud in France.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let us know your thoughts on something we should cover in future editions of the OTI Gazette.

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A CONVERSATION WITH SIR MARK TODD

On his childhood

I grew up in Cambridge, New Zealand which is now the hub of thoroughbred racing and breeding. My father had an agri machinery and earth moving business. My maternal grandfather farmed outside of Cambridge and was neighbour of the famous horseman Ken Brown. It was there that I had my first introduction to riding, and we'd borrow old ponies at weekends. Ever since I was a small child I had a real passion for horses, and the local pony clubs. Kennie Brown trained racehorses, and it was with him that I started riding racehorses, and later I rode out for various trainers doing trackwork.

On the Olympic experience

I was supposed to go to Moscow, but the NZ team boycotted it because of the Russian Invasion of Afghanistan, so my first Olympics was LA 1984 when I was 24 years old which was very exciting. Winning the first gold certainly was but I don't think that it sunk it for some time. You never go into an Olympics thinking you'll win gold, at least I certainly didn't. Any Olympic Games is special, and all are unique and different given the locations. Winning Olympic gold is something everyone understands, whereas winning at Burghley and Badminton is understood by only equestrian enthusiasts. I loved competing at LA as it was my first, but also loved Sydney and London in particular.

On the difference in training three day eventers and racehorses

Pre 2000 the three day eventing format was longer with roads and tracks, and consequently the training required far more stamina and endurance. With racehorses the training is shorter and sharper. The initial training remains the same with long slow build up and with an increase in speed. What remains the same is the horsemanship, feeding, soundness and care of horses. In eventing there are very rigorous veterinary controls which have stood me in good stead.

On his passion for horse racing

I always loved horse racing, but my passion was for riding and it was my dream to be a jockey, but once I was too big I changed direction. I did ride in a couple of point to point races over fences but that is as close as my dream of becoming a jockey got. I was fortunate to train a couple of Group 1 winners including champion filly Bramble Rose. Regarding my training ambitions nowadays I have no desire to train more than 40 horses, but I'd love to have some European Group winners.



On training differences between New Zealand and the UK

In the UK, the training facilities are vastly different, as in New Zealand training generally takes place on the flat training track whereas in the UK, gallops with varying distances and gradients are used. I chose to train again in the UK because this is where we live and where our family is. I've always relished new challenges, and I want to see if I can replicate the success I had in New Zealand. I ride the horses, and it still very much my passion. I don't do the fast work, as I'm too heavy, but I do like to sit on them and get a feel. I do like breaking them in, and believe it is also important for racehorses to be balanced, and move correctly.

Training Eminent to run in Sydney

I was fortunate to be offered the opportunity by Sir Peter Vela to train a real Group 1 contender but it was certainly a huge undertaking as he hadn't run for nine months, and to race first up over 2000m in the G1 Ranvet at Rosehill but a fantastic challenge.

On the retraining of racehorses

A lot of people have the misconception that thoroughbreds are too hot, but that is not always the case and I find they have a better brain to train and work with. I've had a lot of success with ex racehorses in the eventing world, and particularly pre 2000. Bertie Blunt who I rode to win at Badminton was an ex hurdler with Nicky Henderson. The temperament of the horse is key, 'you can look into a horse's eye'. It is important to establish the connection with the horse, and to give them time to get the racing mentality out of their head.

Time away from horses

I've been fortunate to travel the world including interesting places like the Amazon rainforest. Carolyn and I enjoying hiking in the countryside. Spending time with the family snow skiing, and being out on the water is something I like to do. I certainly have many interests and passions away from the horses.

JOHN BERRY

The victory of True Self in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes on the final day of the VRC Carnival at Flemington was not celebrated merely by her OTI share-holders. It also brought jubilation to the street in which I live, Exeter Road in Newmarket, because her breeder Don Cantillon is my neighbour.



Exeter Road, even more so than Newmarket itself, is something of a time capsule. Walk up Exeter Road and you are just a furlong or so from the High Street with little to suggest that this is anything other than a normal residential street – except that behind the houses are tucked four of the oldest training stables in the town. I live in one of them, Beverley House Stables, while on the other side of the street Don lives in Hackness Villa.

The winners of many great races have been trained in Beverley House Stables, among them Hackness, who landed a massive gamble for her owner Robert Peck and trainer Jim Hopper when winning the Cambridgeshire Handicap at Newmarket in 1882. The proceeds of this coup financed the building of an overflow stable on the other side of the street, hence it being called Hackness Villa.

Such glory days are a thing of the past because I train only a small string, while Don's squad is even smaller. Don (who hails from County Cork in Ireland but who came to Newmarket in the 1970s to work for the late Harry Thomson 'Tom' Jones, who was then one of the leading trainers in the country) is a rarity among trainers in Great Britain, where prize money is very poor, in that he makes a living training horses while owning pretty much all of them himself. He is also the breeder of the majority of them, from the handful of mares which he keeps at Rahinston Stud in Ireland. He makes it pay by knowing when to back his horses and knowing when to sell them.



Some of Don's horses are there for life – such as 'Timmy', correctly known as La Estrella, now aged 17 and the winner of 28 races for Don between January 2008 and December 2015 – but the majority of his charges are sold early in their careers once they have shown enough promise to give them some value. True Self came into this category, although she is a rare example of one whom Don sold too soon. He only ran her once, in November 2016, when she was beaten a head on debut, and then sold her to Willie Mullins shortly afterwards.

We're told that there aren't the characters around these days. If that is so, Don is the exception who proves the rule. We could fill this newsletter dozens of times over with tales of Don's idiosyncratic behaviour, but we'll just let the legendary gambler and (now retired) trainer Barney Curley relate how Don first dipped his toe into the waters of the training game.

In 1986 Don approached Curley, then training in Exning on the northern edge of Newmarket Heath, and explained that Tom Jones trained a horse for Sheikh Hamdan al Maktoum, a gelding by Troy named Assultan, who had plenty of ability but who had developed a habit of refusing to race. Don wanted to buy the horse, and wondered whether, if he did, he could place the horse in Curley's stable. Curley agreed but, having seen Don pedal his way up the drive on a push-bike, wasn't sure how the venture (which proved to be extremely successful, Assultan eventually being persuaded to mend his ways) would be financed.

In his book *Giving A Little Back*, Curley relates, "... trying to be as inoffensive as possible because I had no wish to insult him, I said, 'Would it be any harm to ask how you are going to buy this horse?' He was waiting with the answer, 'Oh,' he said with a broad grin spread across his face as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. 'I'm getting a Home Improvement Loan from Lloyds Bank'.

GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW OTI PARTNERS - TOM CHAMBERS

Tom Chambers was first introduced to horse racing through a client, and his first horse was Kalatruce, who was trained by Colin Little to win at Echuca. Tom hails from a small town in Georgia, USA named Byron that is famous for peaches and pecans.



Most successful horses you've owned? Gallic Chieftain is probably the standout and has been a real pleasure to be involved with. Other nice types include True Self, Benitoite, Inverloch and Montabot. Fastnet Tempest was a pretty good horse too.

Race you would most like to win? I wouldn't say no to a Melbourne Cup.

When you win that special race, how will you celebrate? I like your optimism by asking 'when' not 'if' haha. Probably drink way too much champagne and buy into more horses.

Favourite provincial racetrack? Dunkeld is nice looking, but my favourite track is probably Royal Randwick, it's set up so well for owners.

What meeting do you enjoy attending? Spring racing carnival at Flemington is always fun but Autumn at Royal Randwick is right up there (much more user friendly).

Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva? Mmm. Tough one, they're all once in a lifetime horses. Probably Black Caviar though.

What international races have you attended and particularly enjoyed? Haven't been to one overseas yet.

Which international carnival would you like to attend next? Probably Ascot as I hear it's pretty special. Apparently there are people who organise amazing tours I'm told!

How did you get involved with OTI? Graeme Uthmeyer introduced me to Simon O'Donnell. I then met Simon at the RACV club in the city and said I'd be happy to buy into a horse. Simon said 'It's a numbers game Tom, you need more than one'. So I bought into a couple at first. Wouldn't you know it, the expensive one, Holdfast Bay, never fired a shot but the steak knives he threw in, Tee Emar, was a useful type and won the Rough Habit Plate Group 3 at Doomben but got relegated to 2nd on protest (I think Peter Moody was a very unhappy camper about that).

What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership? I like going to the big race days with a competitive runner or two. The anticipation of your horse winning is hard to beat.

Favourite jockey? I like Craig Williams. He's always got a bit to say at the end of a race.

Favourite racing memory? Winning the Chairman's Quality at Royal Randwick with Gallic Chieftain was a very good day. I was speaking with Archie Alexander before the race and said 'see you in the winners circle'. The look he gave me was priceless. He admitted after the race, in the winners bar, that he thought I'd jinxed it as he'd never won one after an owner saying that to him. I've never said it to a trainer since.

OTI horse you are most looking forward to seeing run in 2021? I'd love to see Young Rascal and Benitoite get back to form but the sentimentalist in me wants to see Gallic Chieftain have a great year. He's nearing the end of his career and has given me and the other owners a hell of a ride.

OTI QUIZ

QUIZ

1. Who won the 2019 Ballarat Cup?
2. Who trained Mongolian Khan?
3. Who rode Yankee Rose to win the GR1 Spring Champion Stakes?

NAME THE RACECOURSE



Hint - The feature invitational takes place on the last Sunday in November

RECENT FRENCH ACQUISITIONS



OTI is delighted to have purchased two progressive and lightly raced 3yos who are heading to Australia in early 2021.

ASHIM who is bred by HH The Aga Khan will be trained by Matt Smith, who has had great success with OTI imports including **GREY LION** and **ATTORNEY**.

VARDANI, a beautifully bred individual who will be under the care of Archie Alexander who is having a fantastic season sitting 8th on the Vic Trainers' Premiership.

Both horses will be with their new trainers in January, in preparation for their autumn campaigns.

[WATCH VIDEO OF THEIR WINS](#)

For more information: oti@oti.com.au

OTI QUIZ RESULTS

Quiz

1. Kiwia
2. Murray Baker
3. Dean Yendall

Name The Racecourse

Tokyo
With a capacity of 223,000 racing first took place in 1933.
The inaugural 2400m Japan Cup took place in 1981.

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