



THE NEXT GENERATION

By GINA BRYCE

www.the-ngc.co.uk

Be there...

MARCH 15-18

Cheltenham Festival

The four defining days of the National Hunt season set against the most electric atmosphere you are likely to find at any sporting event.

MARCH 26

NGC Newbury Raceday

The first of the NGC events of 2011 includes a trip to Warren Greatrex's Lambourn yard followed by racing at Newbury.

APRIL 9

Grand National, Aintree

Jaw-dropping drama on and off the racecourse. And for those not too distracted by the incredible shades of fake tan and neon outfits, walking the Grand National course is a must.

APRIL 30

Pre-Guineas picnic

Kick off the Flat season with the NGC and fellow revellers at our pre-racing picnic on 2,000 Guineas Day.

Our new website is up and running

In a world where a person without an online profile is probably a person ceasing to inhabit planet earth, you could be forgiven for thinking the Next Generation Club has been living in an alternate universe for the past year and a half. Many of our members who have attended one of the previous "introduction days" to the worlds of racing and breeding will know that we have been keeping people updated as best as we can through our Facebook page. But now, with the launch of the new Next Generation Club website, we hope to open our doors even further.

Our new website www.the-ngc.co.uk went online last month and will hopefully allow us to not only nurture our existing database of young enthusiasts but also cast the net wider to raise awareness of forthcoming NGC events and ways in which new people can get involved. The site caters for both social and professional

aspects, outlining details of industry training courses and encouraging discussion with members of the committee.

Our new online interface will obviously serve as an additional marketing tool in establishing the Next Generation Club as a point of contact for the younger generations, but it is the target of specific events that have so far delivered the desired results. The 2011 events schedule is now taking shape and this year the committee hopes to build on the valuable network of young people who have become involved with the club over the last year.

Following on from the success of the Plantation Stud raceday and the Tattersalls Sales event, the focus falls on the National Hunt season in the first half of the year as we head to Newbury racecourse on March 26. In keeping with the aim of showing people that bit extra that racing has to offer, the day will begin with

a trip to Warren Greatrex's Lambourn yard, before we are joined by trainer Tim Vaughan for a pre-racing talk in our designated on-course hospitality area. The event should prove to be a great chance to socialise with fellow racing fans, whilst learning a bit more about what is involved in training a National Hunt horse to withstand the rigors of the breathtaking action we will no doubt witness later that day.

As the weather improves, it's time to turn the attention back to the rolling turf of the Rowley Mile. 2,000 Guineas day is always a big social event at Flat racing HQ and so a perfect backdrop for the second of our 2011 events. A pre-racing picnic in the car park will not only set the scene for plenty of champagne-quaffing and beer-swilling but will hopefully also provide a meeting point for young racegoers and newcomers to the sport: a union the committee sees as key to the future of the industry.

Of course, all of these events would not be possible without the help and generosity of the racecourses and various industry professionals, to whom we are extremely grateful. For details on how to get involved in any forthcoming events or to take advantage of NGC membership, visit www.the-ngc.co.uk.



Q&A

POLLY GUNDRY, the former leading point-to-point rider turned trainer and racecourse director, talks about her new challenges

Tell us a bit about your background in the industry?

I spent my younger years hunting and eventing before studying Equine Science at Hartpury, University of the West of England.

I started riding out for Jim Old, Henrietta Knight and The Countess Goess-Saurau with a view to race-riding. During this time I was lucky enough to start riding Richard Barber's ladies' horses and eventually most of his first string in point-to-points. I started riding for Paul Nicholls in 2001 and again rode some lovely winners under National Hunt rules. After spending more than five years travelling the country for Spillers Feeds as a nutritionist, I decided to concentrate on training.

My partner Edward Walker and I had bought 29 acres of pastureland in Devon and Guy Henderson suggested that I might think of applying for a licence if I wanted to continue to train his lovely big horse Fortview. So it was on to the British Racing School to complete the relevant courses in order to gain a National Hunt licence.

What are the plans for the operation?

I am keen to establish a good band of owners but to remain a small yard, where we can concentrate on a small number of horses. I would rather not spend my life on the road travelling from one course to another every day and I would like to stay very hands-on with the horses.

Edward will continue to train point-to-pointers, which can be a good start for some old-fashioned chasing types. If we could produce and sell the odd one or two in a season, that is always very satisfying too, whether it is for us or for other people.

What have you found to be the main challenges in setting up a training operation in the current climate?

Learning to manage quite a few staff has proved difficult. I am glad that we are not near a large training centre like Lambourn or Newmarket, because I like to have staff from an eventing background that are horsemen

rather than staff that have learnt to ride when they decided they wanted to work in racing.

What do you see as your unique selling point?

First, I am a horseman and like to get the very best from the horses. Also very high on my priority list is listening to my owners and finding out what they want out of racing, so that I know what my aims are. If they are people that want someone to try hard for them, I do not think anyone will try harder. But if they are not people that I think I can get on with, I would rather they did not stay, and I have told owners that in the past!

You are on the board of directors of Exeter racecourse; do you think that racecourses do enough to capture the interest of the race-going public?

I think they/we are trying very hard indeed, but sometimes we might not yet be hitting the nail on the head.

Far more properly-trained public relations officers and marketeers are now involved in making this happen, and hopefully we will see a marked increase in the next few years. But it's unlikely to happen quickly.

I certainly think that racing has done all it can to clean up its act recently and, with that, we can be bullish that what the public will see and can do at the races will provide them with great entertainment.

What changes would you introduce to improve the raceday experience?

I think more family-orientated events occurring at racecourses would be good, particularly in the summer.

Point-to-points seem to provide more of a family day out than a proper racecourse. Obviously when children are at school or it is cold weather, it would not attract families, but inside activities for children and outdoor activities when it is warm would help. If you are not interested in betting or horses then there is not much to attract the ladies. Stands of some sort could work well for that market.

Talking Point... Should racing only promote full levy-paying bookmakers?

George Primarolo Totesport



"The problem is that most racecourses are separate commercial entities and hence are free to negotiate deals with whomever they want.

"Offshore firms that can take advantage of beneficial tax rates will have a head start over their UK-based rivals, as they will have more to spend on marketing, so it's unsurprising to see several of them using race sponsorship to their advantage. It's a catch-22 situation as the drop in levy means that several racecourses are having to dip into their own coffers to fund prize-money, which has to be offset with other forms of income. If the only way of doing this is to take sponsorship from offshore firms, then it would be a big surprise if the racecourses were to eschew commercial common sense.

"Obviously the Tote and racing are inextricably linked, and the more people bet into the pool the better it is for racing's finances. We've forged successful partnership agreements with all UK courses over the past three years, from which the tracks receive extra payments from the Tote in exchange for marketing and promoting pool betting on-course.

"Whilst it would be ideal for racecourses to

promote only levy-paying bookmakers, it's very difficult to see how they could be forced to do so at the moment."

Sam Hoskins NGC committee



"Racing's prize-money crisis stems from bookmakers relocating offshore, meaning they are paying no levy on bets accepted from these jurisdictions. Despite this, non-levy paying bookies can advertise in the racing media at the same rates as levy-paying operators.

"Obviously one cannot point the finger at either the media, racecourses or said bookmakers and tell them they are wrong for current practices, as they are all commercial enterprises. So what can racing do?

"If government legislation cannot be changed to force offshore bookmakers to pay levy on their horseracing bets, then I would like to see racing press for the voluntary levy contribution that the likes of Victor Chandler and Sportingbet currently pay. Hopefully, then the likes of Ladbrokes and William Hill would work with racing and get behind this. However, if they refuse, then I believe we need to take a more forthright stance, with a premium

advertising tariff for non-levy paying bookmakers."

Mark Flood Business Development Manager, Racing Post



"From day one bookmakers have been one step ahead of racing and have acted in a way to increase their profits as any commercial trader would. Racing, having been too slow to profit, is now struggling to stay afloat.

"In an ideal world, racing's constituents would cede authority to one leader, who in turn could set about negotiating their share. The problem is that the window is closing and racing needs a leader to make the most of its weakening hand.

"Racing now represents only around 25% of bookmaker transactions, so even if racing took control of that share, it would get very little. If you held shares in your pension in Ladbrokes or William Hill, would you be happy if the share price was decimated as a result of a draconian tax?

"There is no golden egg and unless racing gets state aid it will have to continue to rely on the goodwill of a number of its patrons."

WHAT'S HOT

www.the-ngc.co.uk

Our new one-stop shop for all the latest club news.

Nicky Henderson

2,000 British jump winners for the Seven Barrows maestro and, with a Festival team including the likes of Binocular, Long Run and Bobs Worth, the celebrations are sure to continue.

Dubai

The temperature is soaring, along with the standard of racing, and it certainly helps the Flat fans among us through the cold winter months.

WHAT'S NOT

Racing's measly Tote share

The government's decision to allocate only 50% of proceeds of the sale is yet more disappointment to add to an already gloomy outlook for 2011.

More argy-bargy from the top

Fresh disputes between racing's principal stakeholders weaken our already near-crippled hand.

Continued weather disruptions

Snow, water and ice - we've had the lot. Roll on the spring and a return to the full racing schedule we deserve.