



NORTHERN SPOTLIGHT - BY GORDON BROWN

## Northern Spotlight

08 Feb 2008

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By Gordon Brown

### HARRIET GRAHAM'S ONES TO WATCH

NOT content with training right on border between Scotland and England, Harriet Graham is also the person responsible for the pictures we see in the betting shops and on ATR and RUK. She's an on-course television director and the ultimate professional even when one of her horses is involved in an exciting finish!

Based near the Carter Bar close to the A68 south of Jedburgh, Harriet started out as a permit-holder in 2004 before graduating to a full licence a few years ago. She enjoyed her best score of eight three seasons ago and has some nice horses under her care at the present. Here is a hand-picked list she has selected exclusively for readers of attheraces.com

**BUCKSTRUTHER** We like him a lot. He might run at Newcastle this week but he needs good ground to be at his best so hopefully it will dry up. He's pulled up a few times but he is improving and I'd say he's out best chance of getting back into the winners' enclosure.

**HOOKY'S HOPE** is home-bred out of a winning point to pointer and she has schooled well over fences already. She had a few bumpers and staying novice hurdles and ran quite well at Musselburgh recently and only weakened turning for home. She'll have a handicap mark now and we'll also try her on better ground.

**INNISFREE** was bought quite cheaply for only 2,800gns in 2006 and he won two chases for us at Cartmel and Kelso last summer. He like good ground although he was second over four miles at Hexham last March. He's been aimed at the veterans National at Cartmel where you need to be ten or older to enter. Though he's only run over fences for us, he's still a novice over hurdles and that given us another option.

**LOFTY LEADER** has been a great servant and has won twice over fences and twice over hurdles for us. He's been described as quirky but he has plenty of ability. We'll aim him at a lot of the meetings up at Perth although anywhere right-handed would fit the bill.

**MAYLEE** is a half-sister to Classic Quart, who won a bumper for Michael Scudamore. She shapes up as a staying handicap hurdler and then go chasing - we've already schooled her over fences and she jumps well.

**MR WOODS** comes from the family of the Borders National winner Running Moss. He's not going to run until the autumn - it's nothing serious but we just don't to risk him. He has the scope to be one of our best horses and is an exciting prospect.

**PARISIEN MISS** has had a couple of runs in bumpers and she might run again at Kelso shortly. I can't wait for the day she wins a race as the syndicate that have her have had horses for years and the best they have had is a second - they really are due a change of luck. She's still a little bit green but what a deserving winner she would be "RUSSIAN SKY has to go down as Mr Consistent. He's won four in all so far including twice earlier this season at Carlisle and Perth. He's been in the first four so many times it's unbelievable. We won't run him until the better ground comes and he always seems to go well fresh.

We also have an unnamed Flemensfirth five-year-old half-brother to Buckstruther and he has the potential to be the classiest horse we've ever had. He's 17hh and might well run in a bumper in the spring. We need to be patient as he still needs time to mature but what a prospect he could turn out to be is everything falls into place. "And there is Scarvagh Diamond's half-sister who is a nice big mare. She's going to go point to pointing but we'll to go novice chasing with her pretty soon and she's another that could be anything."

### FIVE FAVOURITIES - BRIAN HUGHES

**RACECOURSE:** Perth. I've had a good bit of luck up there over the past wee while and there is also a lot of craic. There's always something on the go and a bit of a party feel about the place. The track itself is nice, they look after the ground and I just

like it.

**HORSE:** : John Wade's Love That Benny and Jimmy Moffatt's Border Tale. Both have been really good to me but especially Love That Benny as he helped put me on the map. We won three on the trot together last summer and he's still a nice over fences. Also keep an eye on Mr Wade's Atticus Boy - he's just back in from a short break and will be going novice chasing in the spring. He jumped hurdles great and should make a lovely chaser.

**HOLIDAY DESTINATION:** You won't believe this but I've never been abroad on holiday before! I'd love to go skiing one year or go somewhere nice and hot. I never got away in the summer in Ireland as I was riding on the Flat and I couldn't go last year as I was trying hard to get myself established.

**FOOD:** Nice and plain fillet steak and chips please. It can be at home in Co Durham cooked by my girlfriend or out somewhere nice. We're hoping to move down into Yorkshire shortly so I'll be looking for new eating spots.

**HOBBY:** You mean apart from watching racing replays! I used to play a bit of five-a-side football with the lads when I was up at Howard Johnson's but I'm not a golfer and don't have a serious hobby.

## EYECATCHER

QUITE a few horses have been brought to my attention on my recent travels starting at Musselburgh last Sunday where Jack The Blaster was the middle leg of a treble for Richard Johnson.

Trained by Howard Johnson, he was a little bit of a monkey over hurdles but chasing has been the making of him and he will turn out to be a lot better than this. He stays 2m 4f but showed the necessary toe to operate at 2m and Howard was telling me afterwards he could be an exciting prospect next season at places such as Sandown because he's such a good jumper.

I was also quite taken by the hurdling debut of Tamimi's History in the juvenile contest. In what was an eventful little race, he had every chance three out and looks sure to win races for Nicky Richards in those familiar red colours of Jim Ennis.

He was rated 101 on the Flat when trained by Kevin Prendergast so he should have the class to compete at a decent level

## COUNTDOWN TO FESTIVALS STARTING IN EARNEST

DON' know about you, but I can' wait for the next few weeks up here as plenty of Cheltenham and Aintree prospects are having their big Festival prep races.

But one Northern challenger that won't be going to Cheltenham is Money Trix, who was high up in the betting for the Royal & SunAlliance Chase.

I hear he's developed a slight problem since last month's impressive chasing debut success at Newcastle and the Nicky Richards camp must be gutted.

Hopefully the set-back will not be as bad as the one that saw him miss 20 months before his recent return to action.

Meanwhile following the recent publication of the Grand National weights there has been quite a lot of support Cloudy Lane and Donald McCain's Aintree hope run at Ayr on Saturday.

I know a lot of pundits question his stamina so it will be fascinating to see how he goes under top-weight and over 3m 1f in the bottomless ground at the Craigie course.

It promises to be quite a day at Newcastle on Tuesday February 12 with massive entries received for all races.

The one that stands out is Ferdy Murphy's Grade 1 hero Another Promise who scored that memorable novice chase success at last year's Punchestown Festival.

He's set for his comeback in hurdle company and after that connections have the simple task of deciding his Cheltenham target from either the Gold Cup, Champion Chase or Ryanair Chase!

On the subject of the Murphy yard, I must pass on best wishes for a speedy recovery

to stable jockey Graham Lee after his horror fall at Huntingdon.

Graham suffered a double fracture to his jaw and faces a race against time to be fit for Cheltenham.

Fingers crossed he'll make it though and the incentive of partnering so many good horses will be as good a treatment as any doctor can administer.

## GOSSIP

I was sorry to hear on my recent ATR sorties to Southwell that Chris Catlin and Hayley Turner have ended their romance. It's a real shame as both have been riding really well this winter and Chris is set to be crowned all-weather king for 2007-08.

With over 400 rides his strike rate is around 12 per cent while Hayley is currently in fourth place with a pretty similar win to ride ratio.

And, though it may fall into the eyecatcher category, Basalt is a Southwell winner I hear is highly-rated.

He was Tim Pitt's first winner from his new Malton based when landing a touch at Southwell on February 5 and Tim told me he has the ability to win a Chester Cup.

Apparently a recent piece of work took the trainer's breath away so the ex-Aidan O'Brien charge must have been a certainty in that 12f maiden!

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