



STABLE

talk

NARS Newsletter - February 2021



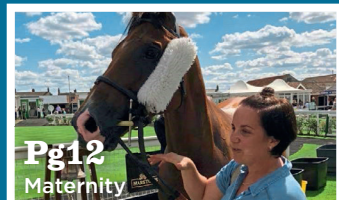
Pg2

George's Column



Pg11

Valentines Comp



Pg12

Maternity

GEORGE'S COLUMN

A YEAR IN REVIEW



When writing up a brief look back at the year that was 2020, I would have thought there would be the usual ups and downs to reflect upon. Not in my wildest imagination did I or anyone know what was in store for us. Within racing we were pre occupied with the likes of Brexit, money for racing from the bookmakers, the levy, staff facilities and numbers, equine welfare and rules around the use of the whip. Covid-19, nope, never heard of that, it sounded like an accumulator bet from one of the online bookies! Little did we know.

January, all the excitement of Christmas and the new year is over and its back to the cold, dark mornings, not that they really stopped for those of us working in racing, but now it's all systems go towards Cheltenham or getting the yearlings ridden away

February saw an announcement that Kempton's plans to sell some of its land for housing was to be hugely scaled back from about 3,000 new builds to about 500. Great, so we can have one day of racing with crowds at Kempton for the King George and the other 80 plus meetings with one man and his dog looking on.

March saw the world sit up and take a bit more notice about this virus emanating from China, called Covid-19, but the racing community was just as focused on Cheltenham as it was on the virus. As the meeting drew closer so did the concerns over the virus. Many wondered if the meeting would go ahead, it did, even when the country began to feel the effects of the virus. Some will argue Cheltenham should not have gone ahead, but as an industry we were told by the government we could do so. In hindsight that was wrong, yet had the Jockey Club cancelled without being compelled to do so there would be no insurance and millions would be lost. Cheltenham was to be

the last meeting with crowds and that will probably remain the case until well into 2021. On the 17th of March racing shuddered to a halt. Soon after some prominent figures in racing were calling for the Chief Executive to be removed from his post (I know that feeling!). The fullness of time will show what a great job Nick Rust did under extreme pressure and racing was to be the first major sport to resume.

April saw the first virtual Grand National and while I hope that never catches on it was a great bit of imagination on the developer's part. It certainly lifted the spirits of racing fans and the country. At this point racing was still two months away from resuming. Everyone struggled on. Fair play to the owners who supported the trainers who in turn were able to keep most of the racing staff employed. Of course, not every trainer was in a position to do so but some simply turned staff away at the door. A panicked knee jerk reaction.

May was a dreary month, the national hunt should have been winding down and everyone looking forward to the 1,000 and 2,000 Guineas. By this time zoom calls were the norm and everyone working from offices were becoming familiar with this technology. Of course, the racing staff were always vocal on the social media platforms and this continued throughout lockdown. Racing and the stakeholders along with the BHA were working frantically to put measures in place that would allow racing to resume and convince the government we were safe to do so. It was also the norm for those that were working in offices to work from sun up to sundown. Staff at NARS and the BHA, PJA and NTF worked in excess of 16-hour days, for months on end.

June 1st saw racing resume at Newcastle. It would be impossible to give credit to all those that made it possible but Dr Jerry Hill was instrumental in the

resumption or racing. A hitherto unknown name among most racing staff, but a vital cog in the wheel that convinced the government racing was both safe and vital to the wellbeing of thousands not to mention the decimated economy. Dr Hill is the Chief medical adviser to the BHA, well known to the jockeys but before Covid-19 not so much the rest of us. Racing is in his debt for his unrelenting work and pure brilliance. June wasn't just a first for racing resuming but also for ARC for providing lunch bags to the staff who attended their meetings. Not much you may think (and you're correct) but bear in mind ARC, responsible for 15 racecourses have always refused to provide a meal free of charge for racing staff, despite the Jockey Club racecourses doing so as well as 11 independent racecourses. It's a start and a positive recognition of the contribution racing staff make. I will be working hard to ensure it continues as we eventually emerge from this pandemic.

July, August and September saw all the major Classics and what would have been festival meetings crammed into a few months when they would ordinarily take place over the year. We went from famine to feast in terms of the quality of the racing staged, but let's recognise the huge effort it took from the racing staff and the trainers to cope with a race programme that went from zero to a hundred miles per hour in what seemed like seconds. Among the unsung heroes in this are the BHA race planning team and in particular Ruth Quinn, another person alongside Dr Hill that we owe a debt of gratitude to. Goodwood was among those festival meetings that was lost to crowds, but only because the government cancelled the allowed 5,000 spectators with less than 48 hours' notice, the loss of revenue was minor in comparison to the cost of perishable foods that were catered for, none of which could now be sold. Ed Arkle, a supremo of Clerks of courses took it in his stride and donated the food to local charities, racing's version of Marcus Rashford!

As we moved into November and December the concerns about a huge drop in horses in training had subsided as the sales held up remarkably well. For once racing was helped by the fact there was a staff shortage and as I write there are more staff working in racing now than there were before Covid-19 hit. Don't be fooled into thinking racing and bloodstock is in a good place though, racing has always been behind the curve and one reason

is the investment in owning a racehorse is usually a two- or three-year project. The real fall out could be yet to come, Brexit hasn't yet had its say but at the time of writing it is already evident that racing horses abroad is going to be much more expensive and we won't see much if anything positive to come from leaving the EU, at least as far as racing is concerned.

Over the past year we have seen racing and people challenged in ways we could never have imagined. Yet, to our credit we have managed to resume racing at the earliest opportunity and employment help up in the industry despite the predictions that there could be huge job losses. For once the fact racing is generally understaffed worked in our favour. Wearing a face mask for the duration of a meeting and the fact that for the first few months the only food available was in the form of a lunch bag made life tough for those going racing. But everyone played their part from the jockeys and the racing staff to those that work at the racecourse. Credit should also go to Racing Welfare who brought out a number of initiatives to help those that were struggling with anything from the mental health impact to being furloughed. Help was offered if a member of staff had to self-isolate or was actually sick with Covid-19 in the form of a £500 payment to cover the 2 weeks. There was also a grant to help with the costs of children getting back to school and the associated costs of uniforms etc. Racing is very lucky to have a charity dedicated solely to their benefit. I would love to say everyone did their best but alas for every saint there is a villain. One trainer threw a dinner party for 30 odd friends over the Christmas period. He wasn't the only one (I'm sure some staff also attended parties), arrogant and irresponsible is a fitting description for such behaviour.

As with all of the racing organisations NARS was extremely busy during COVID-19, unlike most other racing organisations we are staffed by just two in the office, myself and the office manager, Molly Hobbs. Kevin Parsons and Dominique Tortice helped out and that is really appreciated but their full-time roles are the educational programs we run such as Team leadership and Mentoring in the work place.

We will continue to represent you at work at play and at the races, making a positive difference to everyone's future.

George McGrath

NARS RACECOURSE INSPECTORS

Our goal is to ensure the facilities you find at a racecourse are of the highest standards, or put another way, our goal is to meet your expectations.

Looking back to where the concept of inspecting racecourse facilities from a racing staff perspective came from, it was from my own days spent travelling horses around the country. I knew standards were below what is acceptable but until I was elected to lead NARS, I wasn't in a position to do anything about it except complain.

In 2017 we appointed 9 racecourse inspectors. They were all staff that read the newsletter at the time asking for people to take on the role of inspecting a racecourse and feeding back on the issues they wanted to see addressed. This was the first year we had inspectors and we used 2017 as a trial run to iron out any problems with our inspections. The result was we compiled a questionnaire which concentrated on the day facilities, the overnight facilities, the stable yard and the canteen. We then asked a total of 12 questions under those headings which gave us a score for every racecourse in the country. Then we focused on really getting the ball rolling for 2018. This was the first year we published the full report on how every racecourse was scored and how, along with their actual score based on the four headings. The report for 2018 can be found on our website. While some racecourses came out looking quite good, many were exposed as not treating racing staff with enough respect or consideration. Some were simply shocking in their provision for staff. A lot of this came from the fact that very few racecourses understood what a working day at the racecourse entailed for the staff. The common view seemed to be that we just turned up to take the horses racing and then went home. If only it was that easy!! The NARS Racecourse ratings has made the

racecourses understand what a typical day's work entails for us. The result was over 80% of racecourses improved facilities for staff in 2019. The lowest scoring racecourse in 2018 scored a miserable 41 points out of a possible 120. That racecourse improved to 81 points in 2019, moving from a 1 star to a 3 star. Overall, while the lowest score in 2018 was 41 points, in 2019 the lowest was 60 points.

There is still much work to be done, I acknowledge that, but equally it can be easy to overlook the improvements made. When we started this program, no racecourse (except Ascot during the Royal meeting) gave staff free food. Now all Jockey Club (15 of them) racecourses do so as a matter of policy. In addition to the JC racecourses, a further 11 independent racecourses provide a free meal for all racing staff. All racecourses provide free tea and coffee. More racecourses are moving to ensuite overnight accommodation (about time) and many have plans to do so in the near future. Well that was the case pre covid-19. On Covid-19, we will be adding a Covid-19 questionnaire to our 2021 report which will include such questions as, is there enough sanitizer? Is there anyone responsible for maintaining COVID-19 safety measures? Are canteens safe? Do you feel safe at the racecourse?, etc.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the NARS Racecourse report is that it is recognised by the RCA (Racecourse Association), the clerks of the courses and the racing industry. NARS will continue to work for you to improve standards across the board.

YOUR SAY, YOUR WAY

NARS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Within the National Association of Racing Staff all the positions of representing members are democratically elected ones, the exception being the regional committees which can have an unlimited number of attendees.

So, everyone from the Chief Executive to the Racecourse Inspectors and the Executive Council need to be elected if more members stand for these positions than there are spaces.

The reason I am writing to you now is to ask for as many addresses from the members as possible

so that any elections can be fair and transparent. Previously we would have used Weatherby's to send any paper communications to our members, which gets delivered to the yard. Every single member has their newsletter individually named but it is often then care of, and the yard's address. But for the purposes of ballots this is not allowed by law and we are looking to update our membership information.

So, if you want a say on who represents you, we need your home address or at least the one which you want your post sent to.



NEW NARS PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Following the Executive Committee meeting held in October The National Association of Racing Staff are delighted to announce Jemma Marshall as the new President of NARS.



Jemma Marshall
President

Jemma works for Tom Ward in Lambourn and has previously enjoyed a successful career as an apprentice jockey. Jemma is well regarded in Lambourn and the wider racing community and we are delighted that she has accepted the nomination from her fellow Executive Committee members to be the President for the next 3 years. Jemma's knowledge and passion for racing will be a great asset to NARS and all those that work in racing.

We are also pleased to announce that Daryl Byrne has accepted the nomination by the Executive Committee to be the vice President for a term of one year. Daryl, also previously successful in the saddle, is now currently working on a degree in sports psychology and rides out at the Richard Fahey yard in Malton where he is based. Daryl is also the secretary of the local GAA in Malton.

Both Jemma and Daryl add great support to the current Executive Committee and the membership in general and we caught up with them both to ask about their careers in the industry, why they wanted to get involved with NARS, and how they hope to help in the future?



Daryl Byrne
Vice President

Q When did you first join the racing industry and who did you work for?

A Jemma: I first rode out for Charlie Moore when I was 14 on work experience, he scared the crap out of me but I fell in love with it straight away. I went back at the age of 16 when Gary Moore had taken over and continued every school holiday and weekend, I stayed in education to do my A Levels before becoming full time for my gap year. In my gap year I had my first amateur ride and when I went to university, I lasted 3 weeks before deciding I wanted to become a jockey! That was the end of my degree. I worked for Gary for 10 years.

A Daryl: I started working in racing for Harry Rogers in Ireland. I had spent the previous two summers there and as I turned 16, I got offered an opportunity to go there as an apprentice. Prior to that, I was usually spending my weekends and school holidays at racing yards or breaking and pre-training yards.

Q How has your career evolved in the industry and who are you now working for and in what role?

A Jemma: I've been an amateur, conditional and apprentice jockey, with a career total of 73 winners.

I've worked for Godolphin here and in Dubai. I love riding work and travelling horses to the races, hence the head lads' job has never appealed to me.

I'm currently working for a relatively new member of the training ranks in Tom Ward. I approached Tom for a job as I wanted to be in an ambitious environment; I wanted to work for someone who has drive and passion and wants to succeed and is just starting out. We all work as a team, I've saddled, I've driven horses racing and I will lead up when required.

My grounding, working for Gary Moore, is you get out as much as you put in, you work, you don't need titles, you treat people as you want to be treated and never ask someone to do something you are not prepared to do yourself!

A Daryl: After a good start in Ireland, I moved to England where I worked for Mark Johnston and Tim Easterby. After a few years race riding I wasn't enjoying myself and I wanted to turn my attention to something more rewarding. At the end of the day, in race riding, you lose up to 80% of the time so it was not very rewarding at all. At the age of 26, I returned to college and I am now in my 3rd year of a sports psychology degree course at Leeds Trinity University. I work as a part-time work rider for Richard Fahey. I consider myself very lucky to have a job that can remain extremely flexible while I commit to studying.

Q How did you first get involved with NARS?

A Jemma: I saw on Facebook the opportunity to sit on the Executive Committee, so I sent an email about myself and here I am 3 years later.

A Daryl: I saw an advert on Facebook for a Racecourse Inspector. I knew I would be quiet in the Summer months with no University so I applied for the position.

Q What made you want to get involved with NARS?

A Jemma: I wanted to get involved because I saw it as a chance to make a difference, instead of just moaning on Facebook, or moaning while riding out - I could actually do something. I could put forward a stable staff's perspective and help preserve the industry that I love.

A Daryl: I had time on my hands. At the back end of my second year at University, I had 4 part time jobs including being a secretary for a Gaelic Football Club in York. Since, I have had to rein it in a little as I wasn't getting much sleep. A change of scenery is always good for the mind.

Q Since being involved what have you learned about NARS that you didn't know before?

A Gemma: Only two people officially work for NARS on employment issues.

A Daryl: I can't say I knew much about NARS. I remember back in the day, some of the football events held by NARS and some of the golf events. When I was riding, I was so absorbed by racing that I never took any time off work. Looking back, I should have taken time away to commit to some of the hobbies I enjoy doing.

Q And what has surprised you the most?

A Gemma: The amount of work and meetings needing to be attended by two people, on top of dealing with the day-to-day problems staff have.

A Daryl: One thing stands out for me; it's not what NARS do for staff but what NARS can do for staff. I reflect on times I could have given NARS a call and utilised their services. If that message is spread across the industry, I am sure we can progress to having better lifestyles.

Q What have you been proudest of since being part of NARS?

A Gemma: Someone stopped me in the street and said thank you for everything you are trying to achieve for us. It was quite a surreal feeling.
Also, I organised a couple of events – a 6 a side football tournament with 12 teams taking part, 72 Lambourn stable staff playing football on a Sunday.
A pool competition that saw the village pub bursting at the seams and a very happy landlord!

A Daryl: Recently being voted Vice-President by the other committee members was a shock. I know I may not be as experienced as the other committee members or be as involved in racing as much as they are, so it came as a surprise that I would be a candidate for that position.

Q What were your first thoughts when being nominated and voted in for the role of NARS President/Vice President?

A Gemma: I felt humbled that those that voted me in had worked with me for the previous years on the Executive Committee and thought I would be able to do a good job.

A Daryl: I wouldn't have expected to be held in that regard by everyone else on the Committee. Everything I do is to try and benefit the industry in some way and sometimes it feels like whatever you do is making very little impact. Hopefully, things can change for the better in the future.

Q Which areas do you want to help improve for racing staff in the industry?

A Gemma: As much as some don't like to talk about it, there are still staff being treated poorly on a day-to-day basis, things that would never happen in any other industry, and the excuse used, it's horse racing, that's what happens. To improve the knowledge of staff as to what is acceptable and what is not, that employment laws exist and are for horse racing as much as Joe Bloggs. We are a professional sport and everyone involved from the bottom to the top should be treated the same.

A Daryl: Definitely improve the work-life balance for the racing staff. I know racing is quite an unsociable line of work and I hope the industry can begin to understand, by potentially providing more leniency towards raising families and allowing staff to enjoy and commit to social activities outside of racing. This may increase the length of employment in horse racing.

Q. What are you hoping to achieve with NARS in the future, personally and as an organisation?

A Jemma: I feel what I want to achieve is the same, personally and for the organisation. I want staff to feel safe, at home, at work and on the racecourse; to be recognised and appreciated by everyone. For NARS and myself to be easily approachable, to understand what we do and that we all have to work together to achieve our goals.

A Daryl: Personally, being a point of contact is always rewarding. If someone needs to talk or ask a question, I hope they feel happy to call me. I am always at the end of a phone and hope I can help in any way. There is no worse feeling when you have something on your mind but have no one to talk to. As for the organisation, I would hope NARS can continue to build a good reputation up North and continue to work harmoniously with all organisations and staff. Any engagement is beneficial, even a phone call to report how good something is can be used to the advantage of the industry.

The full NARS Executive Committee

President: Jemma Marshall (T Ward) • Vice President: Daryl Byrne (R Fahey)

Louisa Allen (J Boyle), Julia Bennet (J Osborne), Ross Burdon (A Balding),
Greg Davis (Godolphin), Kat Edwards (Dr R Newland), Richard Farmer (J Boyle),
Claudia Fisher (A Murphy), Hannah Gregory (R Phillips), Shaun Johnson (D Kubler),
Gary King (R Varian), Peter McCulloch (H Palmer), Holly Tetsil (O Murphy)



RACING, MY STORY

Like most of the people I know working in racing, I started as soon as I left school at the age of 16. God, that seems like a lifetime ago although I am just approaching my 36th birthday. My first job did not start that well, I wanted to be riding work, not sweeping yards, and mucking out, but looking back I was one of the lucky ones. My employer knew how to bring me along gradually and teach me how to ride properly before I started riding fast work. As I see it these days students graduating from the BRS and NHC are just thrown in at the deep end .

As a workforce we are stretched ever thinner and there does not seem to be the time for the senior staff to be in a position to help the newer members of staff. It's a case of here's the tack room, someone will sort you out a saddle and bridle, there's the board with your lots and you're mucking out those 3 before you start. By the way, we pull out in 30 minutes, so you better have those mucked out and be tacked up, come on hurry up.

I am not sure how long I would have lasted had that been my experience, I wonder what the drop off rate is among the new starters these days? I hope it's not too high because racing needs to attract and retain a young workforce to sustain all the racing we now have.

As I am writing this, I am also working my last weeks' notice, and I just wonder where racing is going in terms of how it treats and views its staff. Personally, I made my decision to get out before the decision was taken for me. This is following two bad injuries over the space of the last 3 years. That is not a bad return for 20 plus years of riding racehorses but it is also a reminder to me of how dangerous this job is. I am also the Mum of a three-year-old. Family time, commitments, and racing do not make for good bedfellows.

I do not want this account of my racing life to portray racing as a bad job, nor do I want to put anyone off getting into racing. This way of life gave me some great times and I will cherish some memories forever - my first ride on a racecourse, leading up my first winner, the joy of riding racehorses on a nice summer's day. I was able to save to put a deposit on a house (you can do it working in racing if you do not drink or gamble to excess, I am proof of that!). However, racing still needs to do more to help, support and appreciate its staff.

There are some things that we cannot change. Working with racehorses will always be dangerous and unpredictable, winters will always bring snow and ice with freezing conditions in which we still need to exercise the horses. But

why do we all need to ride out 13 out of 14 mornings at the crack of dawn? Surely there can be a better way. There are many businesses that operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week but not every staff member has to do 13 out of 14 mornings. Places like supermarkets can rotate staff so why not racing yards? There is virtually no help with childcare, but there are hundreds of Mums who would return to work in racing yards if the employers were more flexible instead of doing the same thing their ancestors did just because that is what worked decades ago.

While injuries may not always be avoided, I felt rushed back before I was fully fit when I broke my ankle, and I know this is common in racing. Many of my friends have returned from injury well before they were advised to by doctors simply because they were pressured by senior staff and sometimes the trainer. I also found head and back injuries were never taken seriously. If you could walk upright you were expected to ride, even immediately after a heavy fall.

So, I start a new job working in an office. I will be safe and warm, but I will miss the buzz of a racing yard and the good days. Unfortunately for me, the dangers and mostly the 13 out of 14 mornings have forced me to seek alternative employment. At 36 I am not quite burnt out, but I am not sure how much longer I could sustain the constant demands of early mornings and physical work. If racing is serious about retaining and recruiting staff, then it needs to address the attitude that makes staff feel as though they are a disposable commodity.

I would like to thank the National Association of Racing staff for their help and advice and Racing Welfare for helping with my physio when I was injured. But I would also like to see the BHA and NTF be more pro-active in looking after its people. You cannot do it without us.

The author did not wish to be named publicly but is known to NARS as a bona fide former employee in the industry.

VALENTINE'S PICTURE COMPETITION

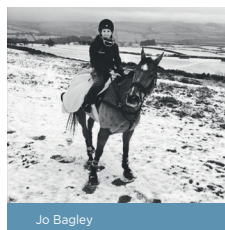
At the start of February, we asked staff to send in pictures of them with their horses for the chance to win £100, the prize generously put up by journalist and author David Ashforth.

Once all entries were received David was then tasked with judging the winner of the best picture.

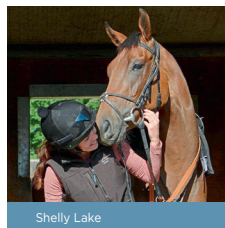
Having narrowed it down to a shortlist of five David said "there were some very appealing pictures and it was difficult to single just one out. I judged each on the image itself and the subject."

I think the winning picture is a very good photo showing the rider's affection for the horse, and the horse looks good."

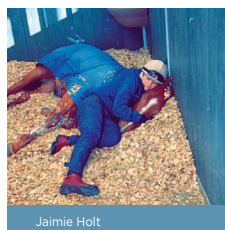
Congratulations to the winning photo sent in by Shaun Johnson who works for Dan and Claire Kubler.



Jo Bagley



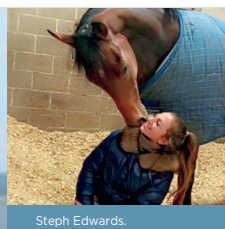
Shelly Lake



Jaimie Holt



Shaun Johnson



Steph Edwards.

MATERNITY, PATERNITY, PARENTING & EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN

WRITTEN BY DOMINIQUE TORTICE

I have worked in the Horseracing Industry for just shy of two decades, the latter 10 years as a single mother. It has been extremely difficult at times to maintain a career and juggle two children. In those ten years I have worked for employers who were accepting that I had to work flexible hours, understood when I had to take time off due to ill children and who treated me as though I was as valuable as any other member of the team. Then there were the employers who just did not!

When I finished working directly with the horses, it was not because I had fallen out of love with my job, but because I was on the verge of physical burnout. After 10 years of trying to balance horseracing and single motherhood, I was tired...

Working in my current role at NARS has opened my eyes to some of the excellent working practices and employers in our industry, but also some of the poor ones too; some of the practices which are outdated and archaic. There is one particular issue facing many staff that halted me in my tracks. I always thought that I had just been unfortunate to work for a few people who didn't understand the juggling which most parents face working in Horseracing, but the more I looked the more I came to understand that I am not a standalone case, there are parents and parents to be throughout the industry who are struggling to maintain a healthy balance with little or no support from their employers, colleagues or the industry.

Understandably it is a topic that I feel very passionate about as it had been a huge part of my working life for many years but also because it is a topic that is very much the elephant in the room.

Last October Women in Racing held a symposium in London to discuss a new project that they would be working on in 2020 called Racing Home. They had identified an issue within the industry regarding maternity, paternity and parenting and felt there was a lack of support available to those working within the Horseracing Industry. I decided to attend the event in London to gain some insight in to how they were going to move this project forward and to see if they were identifying the same issues I and others had/were facing.

Following on from the symposium Women in Racing decided the best way to gain valuable insight was to hold workshops around the country, where parents working from any sector of the industry could attend and share their experiences, challenges and stories. Then Covid 19 happened, which meant that the workshops had to be moved online, so as not to halt the project as it had started to gain momentum. Having had many discussions during this time within the NARS office I decided that it was a project that I felt I could make a difference. I wanted to share my story to shine a light on some of the struggles faced by parents working in the Horseracing industry.

I was asked by Women in Racing to attend as many of the workshops as I could, to share the perspective of the staff working at the grassroots level of horseracing. I spoke openly and frankly about the discrimination I had experienced not just from employers but from people that I had worked alongside. The more I shared, the more it gave others the confidence to share their own experiences. It was a revelation! There were so many positive ideas from the participants about how working practices could be changed to make horseracing a more inclusive workplace for everyone. After all why should someone have to choose between having a family and doing a job they love?

What was clear to me was that the people who work at the grassroots level of Horseracing have some of the answers to what could help the industry with its staffing situation, if only someone was willing to listen. Women in Racing were that someone.

Through the research and data collated by Oxford Brookes University on behalf of Women in Racing, a document has been created that

highlights the issues within the industry and the solutions that could be put in place. This would ensure that everyone is welcome in Horseracing and that the workforce at the heart of horseracing continues to be diverse and showcases a united front.

Having been so involved with the Racing Home project, Women in Racing asked me to join their committee to represent the staff at the grassroots of Horseracing, to which I agreed. This has given me the opportunity to continue to illuminate the challenges women are facing in the industry, not only the maternity, paternity, and parenting aspect.

I feel extremely buoyed by the excellent work Women in Racing have completed with Oxford Brookes University. I feel hopeful that this could possibly be the starting point for the tide turning against the employers that continue to treat the parents in their workplace as an inconvenience or burden, when in reality the people who have returned to Horseracing after having children are sometimes the most driven and passionate. Surely they are staff worth retaining?

In 2020, 71% of young people joining the industry from either the BRS or the NHC were female, in

2019 69 % and in 2018 65%. This gives us an indication that every year the number of young women entering the industry is increasing. This is information that Racing needs to focus on moving forwards, as at some point many of these women may decide to start a family.

I do know that with more and more women entering the industry every year, if Horseracing doesn't change its mindset and some of its working practises to accommodate people starting families then there will be little sustainability and the retention of staff will become increasingly difficult.

Perhaps when it comes to Maternity, Paternity, Parenting and Horseracing we as an industry need to press the reset button. It can work, it can be done, if we all put our heads together and come up with an industry wide approach that will benefit employers and employees.

The members of the NARS team strive to have its members' perspectives given across the industry and amongst the four of us we sit on a multitude of various boards and committees industry wide. It is hugely important to us as an organisation that the members of NARS are always represented and heard!

Dominique Tortice'



NARS UNION LEARN PROJECT



Since our last newsletter much has changed across the Project.

We have now realised how important the launch of the Racing2learn online learning platform has been, these current times have seen far more people take up online learning, with more time on your hands and the access to so many courses on the platform.

This has seen us spend a good amount of our time working with West Suffolk College and our course tutor in developing our two latest modules on the platform:

- Introduction to Mentoring
- Introduction to Leadership & Team Skills

These are both there to give an insight and snapshot of our Mentoring, Leadership & Team Skills course we have run in Newmarket and more recently Lambourn.

This course has been a great success and has seen staff from a variety of yards complete the course, improve their knowledge and gain two Level 2 qualifications for work that some have already been doing within their yards.

Whilst our latest planned face-to-face course in Newmarket has had to be put on hold with the latest lockdown, we are pleased to be able to offer this same course remotely via online learning in conjunction with Darlington College to the staff based in the North.

A great opportunity to roll this out and hit as many members that would be keen to develop and improve, whilst adding qualifications to their CV.

Our face-to-face offer of courses has been stop-start, or in some cases just totally unable to go ahead as planned this year, working with colleges who have been in different Covid Tier systems or issues with tutors/learners who have been isolating, to staff/learners struggling with online classes etc, it has been a challenge. But we have been proactive and dealt with each situation as it has arisen, and in the grand scheme of things these have been small

problems compared to the news we received in October last year.

In October we were told the disappointing news that the Department of Education had chosen after 15 years, to cut the Union Learn funding altogether. They have decided to move the money spent on the projects which cover forty odd Unions across the country directly into adult learning via colleges.

Whilst Colleges are very good at what they do, unions like us at NARS are best placed to speak to, promote and provide learning for staff within its industry. This then sees us work with colleges to provide this learning directly to staff at times and in areas that suit. I can't see many staff driving to a college for a class when they are busy working.

So, a huge disappointment to us that the project that has been totally independently funded outside the industry, or NARS, for eight years would effectively be finished in March this year.

This has seen us speaking to other funders and looking for a way to continue the good work that has gone on for the past eight years, hoping that this can hopefully be done.

We can confirm that just last week we received confirmation from the 'John Pearce Foundation' who were blown away with what the project had achieved in the past and will now fund the project going forward. And we thank them hugely for supporting the project.

In the eight years of the project, we have been able to support so many staff, from writing CVs, giving career advice, to help with finding courses. We have also been able to provide so many courses and see many people developing themselves and gaining qualifications, from the start of the project to December 31st 2020, in eight years our exact number of people that have taken part in learning has been fantastic.

NARS COURSES

English Functional Skills	148
English Online	76
ESOL (English Speaking of Other Languages)	164
ICT	184
Mentoring	56
Mentoring Online	14
Leadership & Team Skills	48
Leadership & Team Skills Online	6
Maths Functional Skills	147
Maths Online	120
Social Media	12

TOTAL	975
Courses Completed	853
Gained Qualification	826
Pass Rate	96.83%

Apprentices Supported (BRS/NHC)	829
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Adding to this the opportunity to speak to students on every course at the British Racing School and National Horseracing College before they head out into the industry has been fantastic. For me personally having started at the BRS in 1996 myself, explaining how when attending there my dream was to be Frankie Dettori, and following the disappointment of not being good enough and preferring food, my career in the industry has been a really enjoyable one. And the opportunities in the industry in a variety of roles is endless, here in the UK and around the World! If you want to improve and develop.

Explaining to the students about NARS, how it was created, what NARS covers and how it can help everyone in the industry is good. The

students go into their workplaces and first jobs in the industry more aware of what they should be paid, the hours they should be working and how they should be treated, and if not, how they can be supported if that isn't the case.

The many questions I get asked always make me reflect on my time and career in the industry, something I am very proud of, and one I love. That is what drove me to help and support staff with their development, and want to make a difference to those working in the industry.

Along with Dominique who works alongside me on the NARS Education project, we are now planning for the project to evolve and to continue what we are doing to help you, the staff, be the best you can!



nars

National Association of Racing Staff