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THIS WEEK'S WINNERS

WORSLEY HAMBLEDON, LARKHILL
Wattersalls Cheltenham open maiden
25yo.— 1, Mr&Mrs C Poste's Pass
Fisher (J King) F Nimmo, ladies' open.—
The Southfield Racing Partnership's
Southfield Theatre (L Bradstock) S

Bradstock, men's open.— 1, R Penny's
Earth Leader (A Cheleda) R Loxton,
restricted.— 1, C Bennett's Miss Seagreen
(S Jukes) S Jukes, conditions.— 1, D
Cope, Mr&Mrs L Cope, L Hartley, S
Sharratt and C Millard's Salvatore (A
Edwards) P Rowley, open maiden.— 1, L
Harvey's Raised With Praise (D Edwards)
L Harvey.

IN THE SADDLE

DUCKS

Angus Cheleda (Larkhill)

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

'Don't underplay the role of grassroots'

Darren Edwards discusses developing stars of the future

OPINION

THE Point-to-Point Owners and Riders Association (PPORA) is one of a number of key stakeholders in the world of pointing.

I've served on the PPORA committee for a number of years as a rider representative and now vice chairman, and so have had a great insight into some of the challenges faced by our amateur sport, but also become aware of the opportunities it can create.

I have spoken many times in the past about how pointing can benefit our equine friends; however, it is important not to underplay the role "grassroots" racing serves in helping riders — something that quickly tends to get forgotten.

I take great pride in watching young horses I have been involved with progress their careers on the "big stage", but equally I enjoy seeing the young riders that have come through pointing do well in their professional careers.

PIVOTAL TO SUCCESS

I PENNED this columned having just watched Ben Jones give De Rasher Counter a fantastic ride to win the Ladbrokes Trophy on

Darren Edwards has ridden over 250 winners and works full-time as a partner at property consultants Fisher German. Darren is a Point to Point Owners & Riders Association (PPORA) committee member.



ITV Racing at Newbury.

Less than 12 months ago, Ben would have been looking forward to a weekend of pointing in either the West Country or Wales. A very down-to-earth lad, Ben honed his race-riding skills around muddy fields in point-to-points and I am sure would vouch that those experiences were pivotal to his current success.

This is the third straight Saturday — following Richard Patrick on Happy Diva in the Betfred Gold Cup and Harry Cobden on Cyryname in the Christy 1965 Chase — that former point-to-point riders have won feature races.

At a time when pointing is facing significant fiscal and organisational challenges, I hope that the British Horseracing Authority do not overlook, or undervalue, the role it plays in helping keep National Hunt racing in the media spotlight. **H&H**

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

Holistic breeding leads to medals

Desi Dillingham on breeding progress and changes to be made

OPINION

BRITISH breeding has come a long way since the British Horse Foundation charity was set up by the late Richard Meade in 1991. As a director of the foundation, I set up the Supporters of British Breeding as the marketing arm in 1996. We recognised that we had the best riders in the world but at one Olympics, not one rider was on a British-bred horse.

Our dream was to spread bloodstock information and encourage breeders to strive for excellence. We planned stallion viewing days, a national equine database that could be used to boost performance, and evaluation for foals up to six-year-olds. We also dreamed of a British sport horse studbook, which was something that sadly we were never able to achieve. The difficulty was we had so many breed societies and sister studbooks and, of course, everyone was focused on promoting their own.

But many more of our aims were achieved. The Futurity scheme, for example, is exactly what we hoped. Often, good stallions would be lost — sold abroad aged nine or 10, before their offspring could be successful. So it really helps to evaluate foals and young horses, giving credit to valuable sires and helping breeders improve their stock.

'SPEED DATING'

BRITAIN'S success in the breeding world has come from individuals who have adopted the best continental methods, such as Lynne



Crowden, Emma Blundell and Judith Davis. I never thought we would ever have a British-bred horse on an Olympic dressage team, but that is looking likely with Carl Hester and Hawkins Delicato, bred by Judith at the Hawkins Stud. We also have the Billy Stud, with two of the best riders of the world in Pippa and William Funnell testing their own breeding.

Now, British Breeding is hoping to tie in the Futurity and Equine Pathway schemes with the existing young horse classes in each discipline. I would love to see equine "speed dating", where top riders view a selection of young British-bred horses.

But the industry still has its problems, such as relying so much on philanthropy from owners and sponsors. Riders and breeders must be professional, and paid well, so that they in turn can retain the best staff and grooms.

We need to address the marketing of our sport, and take inspiration from Formula One to promote British breed societies in the way car manufacturers push Ferrari and Mercedes.

British breeding has come an enormous way, but it is individuals making it successful. We need to recognise these people, and keep them in the industry by helping them make money. High levels of professionalism are needed to breed top sport horses nowadays, and we need a holistic approach that will lead to medals. **H&H**

Canadian-born Desi Dillingham MBE is a former chairman of British Dressage and former president of the British Horse Society. In 2017 she received the Meritoure Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to British breeding.