

2011 Review

Well another year has ended and 2011 proved to be a good one for the yard, with **36 WINNERS** at an **11%** strike rate, while **44.4%** were placed (152 times we were in the winners enclosure) and we won **£161,055** in prize money. Although we were slightly lacking at the top end, we had plenty of progressive sorts that could make up into decent 'Saturday' horses in 2012.

In 2011 we had the a 'Horse of the Year' competition, with horses scoring points every time they finished in the first four, on a 10, 6, 3, 1 basis. The clear winner was **Money Money Money** who picked up 75 points as she won **five** races and was placed on numerous occasions throughout the year. She started off by winning her maiden at Lingfield in January, when blinkers were applied for the first time and although she won comfortably, she was only rated 54 at the time and improved again to win a handicap off 57 at Wolverhampton in April. However, a subsequent seven pound rise made life hard for her and she looked in the handicappers grip until winning again at Bath with the blinkers left off in June. She then improved immensely, staying on well for an unlikely short-head victory at Kempton and then destroying the opposition by four lengths, when recording her fifth victory, on the turf at Lingfield. She was unlucky not to make it six, finishing runner-up on her last two outings at Ffos Las (beaten half a length) and Haydock (a head). Unfortunately she returned from there with a leg injury and will be sidelined for twelve months. However, with such an amazing attitude, you couldn't rule out further success when she returns, her mark rising 24lb in just seven months. We're also really pleased for Mrs Willment as racing needs loyal owner-breeders and she gives her horses all the time they need.

In runner's-up spot was another addition to the yard, the four-year-old **Yes Chef**, who won three races this season and could improve again in 2012. He was extremely headstrong when arriving in the autumn of 2010, so we gelded him and gave him a short break. He came in early to take advantage of the weak maidens and worked hard at home to keep him settled and relaxed. On his first start for us, he narrowly won his maiden (7f) at Kempton, with James been as easy as possible on him and he gradually improved throughout the year as we stepped him up in trip. He won over ten furlongs at Chepstow and then beat an improving Godolphin horse when landing his third race over eleven furlongs at Kempton. He is extremely quirky and likes plenty of space but he's done well over the winter (had a much longer break) and has the talent to improve again.

In third place was **Wrecking Crew** and although not one of our superstars, gave Donna Bamonte plenty of fun this year, especially when she rode him to win an amateur race at Wolverhampton in May. She also had three thirds on him while James finished second on him four times!

The veteran **Shavansky** was our leading performer in terms of ratings and he had another profitable year, always running well (recorded RPRs in the 90s in eleven of his twelve outings) in some very hot handicaps. He has to have plenty of cover in races so needs lots of luck but everything went right when winning a **£12,000 H'cap** at Chepstow in July. However, his best run of the year probably came when he finished seventh of thirty two, beaten just over three lengths in the **£160,000 Cambridgeshire** at Newmarket. He was taken over by the Links Partnership at the end of the season and he should give them plenty of fun in 2012.

The Links also had some lovely three year olds last year, with **Icebuster**, **Alshazah** and **Royal Opera** winning two apiece. **Icebuster** is a big horse that was immature, both physically and mentally at the start of the season but progressed rapidly in the autumn. He battled on gamely to land his maiden over seven furlongs but flourished when stepped up to a mile and a quarter. Having been unlucky at Ripon, he ran out an easy five length winner at Sandown and although the handicapper has had his say, he should improve again in 2012. **Alshazah** missed the start of the season but he too improved in the autumn, when stepped up in trip and ridden more patiently. He seemed to enjoy the polytrack, as he recorded convincing victories at Kempton and Wolverhampton and is another that should improve with age. **Royal Opera** may have lacked the scope of the other two but he still has an admirable attitude at a slightly lower level. He won his two races nicely at Lingfield and Leicester and his toughness has seen him do well with Brian Ellison over hurdles.

A horse that we were expecting big things from in 2011 was **Galatian**, having ended his three-year-old career with back to back wins at Leicester and Goodwood, we hoped he would make his mark in the big races as a four-year-old. Although he battled on gamely when winning a nice handicap at Newmarket in May, foot problems meant he missed most of the summer and he struggled on the softer ground in the autumn. However, he looked on the way back when finishing third at Ffos Las in November and we certainly haven't given up hope on Tangerine Tree's (and Masai Moon!) half brother.

Having made a very promising start to his four-year-old career with wins at Bath and Kempton before an impressive third off 89 at Newmarket, **Sherman McCoy** fractured his pelvis and was off the track for nine months. Unfortunately, we struggled to get him back to his best but he was as game as ever when winning at Salisbury in June but picked up a virus soon after and only managed two more runs. Hopefully he will have a smoother campaign as a six-year-old.

It took a while to get **George Thisby** going but he enjoyed himself in amateur/apprentice events as he won twice at Salisbury and Leicester. Although not winning, **Into The Wind** went agonisingly close to losing her maiden tag as she lost out by the narrowest of margins at Windsor and Warwick in the summer. **Hawridge Song** showed promise in his maidens and **Tony Hollis** had plenty of places but both picked up injuries that ended their season early.

Last year we also set up the **Rod Millman Racing Club** and they had a consistent flag bearer in **Irish Juggler** as he won three races round Southwell in the spring. Old veteran **Mustajed** added a win in an amateur race for Pat at Newbury while Chorus' second foal **Madame Kintyre** was a winner at Bath, before being caught on the line at Ffos Las and Leicester in the autumn. The club had **five winners** and **fourteen places** with prize money of **£14,817** in its inaugural season. It is only **£160** to join for a year or **£85** for six months - great value!

It wasn't only Money Money Money who was in good form for Mrs Willment as both **On The Feather** and **Shy** found their way to the winners enclosure. **On The Feather** improved gradually through the year, finishing second three times before winning at Salisbury (same race **Shy** won the previous year) and was an unlucky second at Ffos Las on her following outing. **Shy** struggled slightly at the start of the season but was revitalised by first-time blinkers when running out an easy winner at Chepstow.

Unfortunately the handicapper overreacted with a ten pound rise that made her life much harder.

We also had a useful jumper, as the enigmatic **Numide** picked up a couple of hurdles at Ffos Las and Bangor and ended his campaign with a seventh in the **Imperial Cup**. Things haven't gone his way this season and he had a heavy fall at Ffos Las in December, hopefully his confidence isn't too dented as he retains plenty of ability. We also have another character in **Mobaasher** and his performances are steadily improving so it would be great to get another win out of him while we had a second with **Eight Keys** in a bumper at Ffos Las.

We also had **seven** winners from this year's crop of two-year-olds, with plenty likely to improve at three, although we had far too many seconds (twelve, including six in the £10,000 bonus events) which was frustrating. **Tweet Lady** and **Night Angel** tied in the two-year-old version of 'Horse of the Year', both scoring 26 points.

Tweet Lady was particularly successful for the yard as she was leased to Racing For Change and became the 'People's Horse'. She has her very own website and a twitter account that has over 1,700 followers or 'owners', who had the chance to go racing or meet Tweet Lady at the yard. She made a promising debut when fifth behind future Group 1 winner Elusive Kate before finishing second at Ffos Las. She then won both her nurseries at Kempton, making all the running and gamely fighting off the opposition.

Our best two-year-old on the ratings was **Mister Musicmaster** and having taken a while to get the hang of racing, he emerged as a decent sprinting two-year-old in mid-summer. He blitzed the opposition when making all the running in nurseries at Sandown and Haydock before running a cracking race to finish third at York's Ebor meeting.

The massive **Wyndham Wave** was a shell of a horse at two but still managed to win second time out at Leicester, showing a lovely cruising speed in the process. He found things happening too quickly in a competitive nursery round Warwick but is the type to keep improving with racing and is a horse to look forward to.

We also won two maidens with homebred fillies, although both picked up a virus mid-season that sidelined them. **Blackdown Fair** was third at 100/1 on her debut at Newbury before running out an impressive four length winner at Salisbury in June and she looked to have a very bright future before getting ill and she had the rest of the year to recover, she has the size and scope to do well this year. Unlike her brothers, **Golden Valley** is a small filly but one with a big heart and she ran out an easy winner at Doncaster. Things didn't go right in her subsequent starts but she has plenty of ability.

We had no luck with both **Night Angel** and **Meloneras**, as they managed seven seconds between them and both were narrowly denied the £10,000 bonus. They were out early in the spring to take advantage of their precociousness, but Night Angel met Dozy (RPR98) when eleven lengths ahead of the third in first-time blinkers, while Meloneras idled in front at Ffos Las before spooking at something when losing out by an agonising short-head and a nose at Leicester. Unfortunately life got harder as the season went on but gave their owners plenty of fun before being sold abroad to continue their careers.

Another to rack up the seconds was **Maccabees**, as he was runner-up in maidens at Sandown and Salisbury, unfortunately his temperament rather got in the way but hopefully he has strengthened up both physically and mentally over the winter. **Ivor's Princess** was also narrowly denied a win in mid-summer and although she didn't go on as planned, at least she starts her three-year-old career on a workable mark.

Horses that are likely to do much better at three now they are handicapped are **Dovil's Date** who still managed a second at Lingfield, **My Boy Ginger** (Yes Chef's half brother) and **Smart Affair**. Meanwhile there are some that didn't make the track at two that have the size and scope to do well and a lovely bunch of two-year-olds, so there is plenty to look forward to in 2012.

Horse of the Year Final Scores

1st 75 Money Money Money - Mrs Jenny Willment

2nd 49 Yes Chef - Coombeshead Racing

3rd 46 Wrecking Crew - Perry Bamonte

4th 41 George Thisby

5th 37 Icebuster

6th 37 On The Feather

7th 36 Irish Juggler

8th 35 Royal Opera

9th 32 Alshazah

10th 27 Mustajed

2YO Horse of the Year Final Scores

1st 26 Night Angel - The Links Partnership

1st 26 Tweet Lady - The People's Horse

3rd 24 Mister Musicmaster - Mrs Jan Fuller

4th 23 Meloneras

5th 13 Blackdown Fair

6th 12 Maccabees

7th 10 Golden Valley

7th 10 Wyndham Wave