

INDEX TO THE 14TH 2018 CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL MEDIA INFORMATION PACK

This 14th media information pack for The Festival was compiled by Racenews on Thursday, March 8, and is for immediate release. It contains final information ahead of The Festival 2018. There will be a 15th and final pack after The Festival - with updated trainer and jockey statistics, plus lots of other information.

Page 1, the index, is updated with each pack to ensure easy reference to the information received in the build-up to the 2018 Festival at Cheltenham from Tuesday, March 13, to Friday, March 16, which has record prize money of over £4.6 million, up £285,000 (seven per cent). If you have any queries about the information in the pack or its delivery, please ring Racenews on +44 (0)20 7704 0326 or email racenews@racenewsonline.com. Sophia Dale is your Cheltenham Racecourse contact through direct dial +44 (0)1242 537 683, mobile +44 (0)7557 054 577 or email: sophia.dale@thejockeyclub.co.uk

Each pack is also available on Cheltenham's website - www.cheltenham.co.uk and through Twitter - @RacenewsService

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The Festival is almost here...

Thursday, March 8, 2018 – There is now less than a week to go until The Festival 2018, with record prize money of more than £4.6 million, commences on Champion Day, Tuesday, March 13, when the highlight is the G1 Unibet Champion Hurdle.

The greatest four days in Jump Racing continue with Ladies Day on Wednesday, March 14, when the feature race is the G1 Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase over two miles.

The G1 Ryanair Chase and the Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle are the St Patrick's Thursday highlights on March 15.

Gold Cup Day, Friday, March 16, is the culmination of The Festival, with the £625,000 Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup, due off at 3.30pm, eagerly anticipated.

This pre-meeting media information pack contains facts and figures about The Festival, statistics, possible landmarks and news, plus a look at the bonuses on offer.

A full race programme is also included, along with information about what is happening off the track over the four days of The Festival.

There is a final media pack, gathering all the statistics together, the week after The Festival.

Cheltenham Racecourse

Cheltenham Racecourse is situated in Prestbury on the northern outskirts of the historic spa town of Cheltenham.

The Home of Jump Racing, Cheltenham Racecourse is the venue for the world's pre-eminent Jump meeting. The Festival, which happens in March over four days every year, next takes place from Tuesday, March 13, to Friday, March 16, 2018 inclusive and tickets remain on sale.

Set against the beautiful backdrop of the Cotswolds, Cheltenham Racecourse is a stunning natural arena and offers the highest-quality action throughout the Jump season.

More information is available at www.cheltenham.co.uk and through Twitter (@CheltenhamRaces), Facebook www.facebook.com/thehomeofjumpracing and Instagram (@CheltenhamRaces).

About The Jockey Club

Cheltenham is part of The Jockey Club which stages thrilling sporting occasions including The Randox Health Grand National, The Cheltenham Festival and The Investec Derby.

Millions of people every year enjoy the special experiences The Jockey Club offers through racing, music, food and entertainment. Governed by Royal Charter, every penny made goes back into British Racing to help the sport thrive.

The Jockey Club was founded in 1750 and today is the largest commercial group in Britain's second-biggest spectator sport, operating 15 racecourses nationwide, The National Stud, Jockey Club Estates, Jockey Club Catering, Jockey Club Live and the charity, Racing Welfare. For more information, visit www.thejockeyclub.co.uk

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THE FESTIVAL 2018

Champion Day – Tuesday, March 13 (Old Course)

Time	Race	Distance	Prize Money
1.30pm	Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle (Grade 1)	2m ½f	£125,000
2.10pm	Racing Post Arkle Novices' Chase (Grade 1)	2m	£175,000
2.50pm	Ultima Handicap Chase (Grade 3)	3m 1f	£110,000
3.30pm	Unibet Champion Hurdle (Grade 1)	2m ½f	£450,000
4.10pm	OLBG Mares' Hurdle (Grade 1)	2m 4f	£120,000
4.50pm	National Hunt Chase (Amateur Riders' Novices' Chase) (Grade 2)	4m	£125,000
5.30pm	Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase (Listed) (0-145)	2m 4½f	£70,000
	<i>Total</i>		<i>£1,194,440</i>

Ladies Day – Wednesday, March 14 (Old Course & Cross Country)

Time	Race	Distance	Prize Money
1.30pm	Ballymore Novices' Hurdle (Grade 1)	2m 5f	£125,000
2.10pm	RSA Insurance Novices' Chase (Grade 1)	3m ½f	£175,000
2.50pm	Coral Cup Handicap Hurdle (Grade 3)	2m 5f	£100,000
3.30pm	Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase (Grade 1)	2m	£400,000
4.10pm	Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase	3m 6f	£65,000
4.50pm	Boodles Fred Winter Juvenile Handicap Hurdle (Grade 3)	2m ½f	£80,000
5.30pm	Weatherbys Champion Bumper (Grade 1)	2m ½f	£75,000
	<i>Total</i>		<i>£1,020,000</i>

St Patrick's Thursday – Thursday, March 15 (New Course)

Time	Race	Distance	Prize Money
1.30pm	JLT Novices' Chase (Grade 1)	2m 4f	£150,000
2.10pm	Pertemps Network Final (Handicap Hurdle) (Grade 3)	3m	£100,000
2.50pm	Ryanair Chase (Grade 1)	2m 5f	£350,000
3.30pm	Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle (Grade 1)	3m	£325,000
4.10pm	Brown Advisory & Merriebelle Stable Plate (Handicap Chase) (Grade 3)	2m 5f	£110,000
4.50pm	Trull House Stud Mares' Novices' Hurdle (Grade 2)	2m 1f	£90,000
5.30pm	Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup A R Handicap Chase (0-145)	3m 2f	£70,000
	<i>Total</i>		<i>£1,195,000</i>

Gold Cup Day – Friday, March 16 (New Course)

Time	Race	Distance	Prize Money
1.30pm	JCB Triumph Hurdle (Grade 1)	2m 1f	£125,000
2.10pm	Radox Health County Handicap Hurdle (Grade 3)	2m 1f	£100,000
2.50pm	Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle (Grade 1)	3m	£125,000
3.30pm	Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup (Grade 1)	3m 2½f	£625,000
4.10pm	St James's Place Foxhunter Chase (Amateur riders)	3m 2½f	£45,000
4.50pm	Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle	2m 4½f	£70,000
5.30pm	Johnny Henderson Grand Annual Handicap Chase (Grade 3)	2m ½f	£110,000
	<i>Total</i>		<i>£1,200,000</i>

Record prize money for The Festival 2018 - **£4.59 million**, up £285,000 (+ seven per cent)

Facts and stats – The Festival

- £100,000,000 – local (Gloucestershire) economic impact of The Festival annually (as of 2015).
- £4,590,000 – record amount of headline prize money on offer at The Festival 2018 – the most of any Jump festival in the world, over £1,000,000 per day.
- £2,300,000 – the amount of money taken from the cash machines at The Festival 2016
- £625,000 – record prize money available for the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup.
- 105,000 – people using Cheltenham Spa train station over the four days of racing.
- 80,000 – number of movements between the racecourse and the town on the shuttle bus service.
- 70,000 – maximum capacity at Cheltenham on Cheltenham Gold Cup Day (when all the temporary facilities are open).
- 65,000 – average attendance over the four-day period of The Festival.
- 45,000 – bread rolls eaten at The Festival 2015.
- 45,000 – afternoon teas served to customers at The Festival 2015.
- 40,000 – hospitality guests served over the four days of The Festival.
- 40,000m² – volume of space that is built for the four days in the Tented Village and the triple decker that sits alongside the racecourse.
- 36,500 – vehicles parked over the four days.
- 21,120 – distance, in feet, run during the National Hunt Chase, The Festival's longest race.
- 12,320 – yards of running rails surrounding the track.
- 10,000 – the number of cars parked each day on site.
- 8,000+ - gallons of tea and coffee served.
- 5,936 – staff employed over The Festival.
- 5,000 – bundles of birch used in the fences every season.
- 2001 – the only year, besides the periods during the two World Wars, that The Festival has been cancelled (due to foot and mouth disease).
- 1934 – the year Golden Miller became the first horse to win both the Cheltenham Gold Cup and the Grand National in a single season.
- 900 – members of the press accredited for The Festival each year.
- 350 – chefs on site.
- 250 - number of bookmakers on site each day.
- 100 - helicopter movements per day.
- 50 - staff coaches per day, sourced from all over the country, as far away as London, Cardiff, Swansea, Birmingham and Coventry.
- £45,000,000 – cost of the redevelopment of Cheltenham Racecourse. This project was concluded on time and within budget in November, 2015.
- 30 – extra flights put on by Ryanair on the Dublin to Birmingham route during The Festival period (around 20,000 customers will use Ryanair).
- 28 – races run at The Festival.
- 22 – fences jumped during the Cheltenham Gold Cup.
- 9 – tons of potatoes consumed during The Festival.
- 7 – most wins by a jockey – Ruby Walsh – in a single year.
- 6 – most consecutive victories by a horse in any Cheltenham Festival race - Quevega in the OLBG Mares' Hurdle between 2009 and 2014.
- 5 - tons of smoked and fresh salmon consumed at The Festival.
- 5 – number of feature races run during The Festival - the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup, Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase, Unibet Champion Hurdle, the Ryanair Chase and Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle.
- 3 – the three-storey temporary structure installed for The Festival, beyond the Guinness Village, is the biggest, three-tiered temporary structure in Europe.
- 2 – shortest distance raced at The Festival in miles.

Catering Specific

Sustainability

- Local produce at the heart of what we do
- Up to 70% of the fruit & vegetables used are sourced within the Cotswolds region
- 100% of the cheese used is produced within 50 miles of Cheltenham
- 100% of the salmon is cured or smoked within 50 miles (Severn and Wye & Coln Valley) & is 100% sustainable Scottish salmon
- 100% of all the seafood is best of British, either landed at Orkney or Brixham
- 100% of the afternoon tea selections is best of British

Numbers

- 3,500 catering team operating the event each day
- 350 chefs catering each day of the event
- 350 managers running the event each day
- 750 students from over 20 colleges work at The Festival each day
- 5 furlongs of temporary bar counters
- 40,000 hospitality meals
- 24 marquees including the longest triple deck structure in Europe, with over 2.5 miles of internal walls
- 8,000+ gallons of tea & coffee consumed
- 5 tons of cheese consumed
- 9 tons of potatoes consumed
- 5 tons of salmon consumed
- 240 private boxes
- 12 restaurants
- 34 temporary kitchens
- 72 mobile catering units

Look out for at The Festival in 2018

Jockeys

Seeking first winner

Leighton Aspell (52 rides), Harry Bannister (6 rides), Sean Bowen (16 rides), Henry Brooke (10 rides), Johnny Burke (20 rides), Tom Cannon (22 rides), Harry Cobden (8 rides), Lizzie Kelly (9 rides), Will Kennedy (20 rides), Joshua Moore (13 rides), Danny Mullins (21 rides), David Mullins (28 rides), James Reveley (10 rides), Mark Walsh (22 rides), Adam Wedge (10 rides), Trevor Whelan (4 rides).

Trainers

Seeking first winner

Peter Bowen (38 runners), David Bridgwater (13 runners), David Dennis (2 runners), Brian Ellison (33 runners since 1994), Micky Hammond (13 runners since 1994), Anthony Honeyball (7 runners), Martin Keighley (31 runners), Neil King (7 runners), Kerry Lee (2 runners), Charlie Longsdon (58 runners), Fergal O'Brien (13 runners), Nicky Richards (35 runners), Jeremy Scott (13 runners), Tim Vaughan (40 runners), Paul Webber (60 runners), Harry Whittington (2 runners).

Horses

Appearances

Horses entered this year with most previous appearances at The Festival:

SIX PREVIOUS APPEARANCES (most recent on the right)

Bless The Wings (Gordon Elliott IRE) – entered in Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase – 10th, PU, 15th, 2nd, 2nd, 2nd

Cue Card (Colin Tizzard) – entered in Ryanair Chase and Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup - 1st, 4th, 2nd, 1st, F, F

The New One (Nigel Twiston-Davies) – entered in Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle - 6th, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 4th, 5th

FIVE PREVIOUS APPEARANCES (most recent on the right)

Caid Du Berlais (Rose Loxton) – entered in St James's Place Foxhunter Chase – 2nd, 3rd, 16th, F*, 8th*

Cause Of Causes (Gordon Elliott IRE) – 7th, 2nd, 1st, 1st, 1st

Double Ross (Nigel Twiston-Davies) – 8th, 3rd, 3rd, 11th, 9th

On The Fringe (Enda Bolger IRE) – 4th, 3rd, 1st, 1st, 4th

*Caid Du Berlais ran in both the Ultima Handicap Chase and the Pertemps Network Final at The Festival in 2017

Go Ballistic made nine appearances at The Festival between 1994 and 2003.

Wins

Horses entered this year with more than one previous win at The Festival:

THREE PREVIOUS WINS

Cause Of Causes (Gordon Elliott IRE) – entered in Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase; won J T McNamara NH Chase (2015), Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Handicap Chase (2016) & Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase (2017)

TWO PREVIOUS WINS

Cue Card (Colin Tizzard) – entered in Ryanair Chase and Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup; won Weatherbys Champion Bumper (2010) & Ryanair Chase (2013)

Douvan (Willie Mullins IRE) – entered in Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase and Ryanair Chase; won Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle (2015) & Racing Post Arkle Novices' Chase (2016)

Faugheen (Willie Mullins IRE) – entered in Unibet Champion Hurdle and Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle; won Ballymore Novices' Hurdle (2014) & Unibet Champion Hurdle (2015)

On The Fringe (Enda Bolger IRE) – entered in St James's Place Foxhunter Chase; won St James's Place Foxhunter Chase (2015 & 2016)

Tiger Roll (Gordon Elliott IRE) – entered in Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase; won JCB Triumph Hurdle (2014) & National Hunt Chase (2017)

Un De Sceaux (Willie Mullins IRE) – entered in Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase and Ryanair Chase; won Racing Post Arkle Novices' Chase (2015) & Ryanair Chase (2017)

Yorkhill (Willie Mullins IRE) – entered in Unibet Champion Hurdle, Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase and Ryanair Chase – won Ballymore Novices' Hurdle (2016) & JLT Novices' Chase (2017)

Quevega won at The Festival six times between 2009 and 2014.

History makers at The Festival?

Unibet Champion Hurdle favourite **Buveur D’Air** (Nicky Henderson) has the chance to become the 15th multiple winner of the two-mile championship and the first since Hardy Eustace (2004 & 2005).

Victory for Buveur D’Air, three-time runner-up **My Tent Or Yours** or **Charli Parcs** would give trainer Nicky Henderson a record seventh Unibet Champion Hurdle victory.

Ruby Walsh would become the most successful jockey ever in the history of the Unibet Champion Hurdle if successful for the fifth time.

Altior could be the 12th horse to follow up victory in the Racing Post Arkle Novices’ Chase with success in the Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase. The Nicky Henderson-trained runner is unbeaten at The Festival, having won the Sky Bet Supreme Novices’ Hurdle in 2016 and the Racing Post Arkle Novices’ Chase in 2017.

Altior and **Yorkhill** (Willie Mullins IRE), winner of the Ballymore Novices’ Hurdle in 2016 and JLT Novices’ Chase in 2017, have the chance to join a select group of horses by winning three different races at The Festival in consecutive years. Flyingbolt, Bobs Worth, Vautour and Cause Of Causes are the only four horses who have already achieved the feat.

Sizing John (Jessica Harrington IRE) could become the first back-to-back winner of the Timico Cheltenham Gold since Best Mate (2002, 2003 & 2004).

Ireland’s champion Jump trainer Willie Mullins is yet to win the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup, but has saddled the runner-up on six occasions – Florida Pearl (2000), Hedgehunter (2006), Sir Des Champs (2013), On His Own (2014) and Djakadam (2015 & 2016).

Cue Card (Colin Tizzard), at the age of 12, is bidding to be the oldest winner of the Ryanair Chase and one of the oldest winners of a G1 championship race at The Festival. Cue Card is a two-time winner at The Festival, including in the 2013 Ryanair Chase. Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup winners Silver Fame (1951) and What A Myth (1969) were victorious as 12-year-olds, as was the 1977 Champion Chase victor Skymas. No 13-year-olds have triumphed in the top races at The Festival.

Balko Des Flos (Henry de Bromhead IRE) is out to provide Ryanair chief executive Michael O’Leary with a first victory in the Ryanair Chase – O’Leary’s Gigginstown House Stud has owned the runner-up four times - Mossbank (2008), First Lieutenant (2013), Valseur Lido (2016) and Sub Lieutenant (2017).

Samcro (Gordon Elliott IRE) could eclipse Mr Kildare as the shortest-priced winner of the Ballymore Novices’ Hurdle. Mr Kildare, trained in Ireland by Liam Browne, was returned at 8/11 in 1978.

JCB Triumph Hurdle favourite **Apple’s Shakira** (Nicky Henderson) is bidding to become the fourth filly to win the race and the first since Snow Drop in 2000.

Willie Mullins has a strong hand as he bids to saddle his ninth winner of the Weatherbys Champion Bumper. His team includes the market leader **Blackbow**.

Mullins is chasing an unprecedented fifth success in the RSA Insurance Novices’ Chase. His four previous winners are Florida Pearl (1998), Rule Supreme (2004), Cooldine (2009) and Don Poli (2015).

2017 Albert Bartlett Novices’ Hurdle scorer **Penhill** (Willie Mullins IRE) could be the first horse successful in that race to go on and win the Sun Bets Stayers’ Hurdle. Previous Albert Bartlett Novices’ Hurdle winners to run in the Sun Bets Stayers’ Hurdle have been – 2006 Black Jack Ketchum (fell in 2007 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2007 Wichita Lineman (9th in 2008 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2010 Berties Dream (6th in 2011 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2011 Bobs Worth (3rd in 2016 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2013 At Fishers Cross (3rd in 2014 Stayers’ Hurdle, 4th in 2015 Stayers’ Hurdle, PU in 2016 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2015 Martello Tower (7th in 2016 Stayers’ Hurdle), 2016 Unowhatimeanharry (3rd in 2017 Stayers’ Hurdle).

The Festival - a look back to....

10 years ago – The Wednesday of The Festival was abandoned due to high winds. All the races were re-scheduled over the next two days, with a 10-race card on the Thursday and a nine-race card on the Friday. The feature Cheltenham Gold Cup was a head-to-head between Kauto Star and Denman, both trained by Paul Nicholls. It was Denman who came out on top, scoring by seven lengths from his stable companion.

20 years ago – Istabraq lands the first of his three victories in the Champion Hurdle, scoring easily by 12 lengths from his stable companion Theatreworld. After twice disappointing in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, One Man finally got his name on The Festival roll of honour with a famous victory in the Queen Mother Champion Chase.

30 years ago – Fred Winter saddles the last of his 28 winners as a trainer at The Festival as Celtic Shot takes the Champion Hurdle. Winter, who also partnered 17 winners at The Festival as a jockey, died in 2004 and is remembered at The Festival with the Boodles Fred Winter Juvenile Handicap Hurdle.

40 years ago – Monksfield, the 1977 runner-up, takes the Champion Hurdle ahead of Sea Pigeon with the 1977 winner Night Nurse in third. Monksfield would go on to win the hurdling showpiece again in 1979. Snow causes the abandonment of Gold Cup Day. The Cheltenham Gold Cup is subsequently transferred to The April Meeting almost a month later and is won by Midnight Court, trained by Fred Winter and ridden by John Francome.

50 years ago – Tom Dreaper, the most successful trainer of all-time in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, wins the Blue Riband contest for the fifth and final time with Fort Leney. Persian War lands his first Champion Hurdle. He would go on to win again in 1969 and 1970, making him one of five horses to win the race three times.

60 years ago – Trainer Vincent O'Brien captures both divisions of the Gloucestershire Hurdle (now the Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle) with Admiral Stuart and Prudent King. O'Brien, who trained a total of 23 winners at The Festival in 11 years, is beginning to conquer the Flat and later in the year saddles Ballymoss to victory in the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Ascot and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

70 years ago – Cottage Rake, trained by Vincent O'Brien and ridden by Aubrey Brabazon, wins the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Cottage Rake would go on to triumph again in 1949 and 1950.

80 years ago – The reign of the great Golden Miller finally comes to an end as he is beaten two lengths into second by Morse Code in the Cheltenham Gold Cup. The only horse to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup five times, plus the 1934 Grand National, Golden Miller is retired the following season and lives on to the grand old age of 30.

90 years ago – The second running of the Champion Hurdle is won by the four-year-old Brown Jack. Following his Cheltenham success, Brown Jack is switched to the Flat and becomes a huge public favourite, winning the Queen Alexandra Stakes at Royal Ascot a record six times.

The Holland Cooper Leading Jockey Award At The Festival - 2017 Standings

Jockey	1st	2nd	3rd
Ruby Walsh	4	1	3
Robbie Power	3	-	-
Noel Fehily	2	3	1
Bryan Cooper	2	1	2
Nico de Boinville	2	-	2
Richard Johnson	2	-	1
Mr Jamie Codd	2	-	-
Paul Townend	2	-	-
Davy Russell	1	3	3
Jack Kennedy	1	-	1
Miss Gina Andrews	1	-	-
David Bass	1	-	-
Miss Bryony Frost	1	-	-
Ms Lisa O'Neill	1	-	-
Denis O'Regan	1	-	-
Tom Scudamore	1	-	-
J J Slevin	1	-	-

Previous winners of the Holland Cooper Leading Jockey Award are listed below, with current jockeys in bold.

2017	Ruby Walsh (4)	1998	A P McCoy (5)
2016	Ruby Walsh (7)	1997	A P McCoy (3)
2015	Ruby Walsh (4)	1996	Richard Dunwoody (2)
2014	Ruby Walsh (3)	1995	Norman Williamson (4)
2013	Ruby Walsh (4)	1994	Charlie Swan (3)
2012	Barry Geraghty (5)	1993	Charlie Swan (4)
2011	Ruby Walsh (5)	1992	Jamie Osborne (5)
2010	Ruby Walsh (3)	1991	Peter Scudamore (2)
2009	Ruby Walsh (7)	1990	Richard Dunwoody (2)
2008	Ruby Walsh (3)	1989	Tom Morgan (2)
2007	Robert Thornton (4)	1988	Simon Sherwood (2)
2006	Ruby Walsh (3)	1987	Peter Scudamore (2)
2005	Graham Lee (3)	1986	Peter Scudamore (2)
2004	Ruby Walsh (3)	1985	Steve Smith Eccles (3)
2003	Barry Geraghty (5)	1984	Jonjo O'Neill (2)
2002	Richard Johnson (2)	1983	Graham Bradley (2)
2001	<i>cancelled - foot & mouth</i>	1982	Jonjo O'Neill (1)
2000	Mick Fitzgerald (4)	1981	John Francome (3)
1999	Mick Fitzgerald (4)	1980	Mr Jim Wilson (3)

LEADING CURRENT JOCKEYS AT THE FESTIVAL

Ruby Walsh	56
Barry Geraghty	34
Richard Johnson	22
Davy Russell	18
Tom Scudamore	10
Bryan Cooper	8
Timmy Murphy	8
Ms Nina Carberry	7
Mr Jamie Codd	7
Sam Twiston-Davies	7
Paddy Brennan	6
Nico de Boinville	6
Paul Townend	6
Noel Fehily	5
Andrew Lynch	4
Denis O'Regan	4
Robbie Power	4
Mr Sam Waley-Cohen	4

TOP JOCKEYS AT THE FESTIVAL (SINCE 1945, CURRENT JOCKEYS IN BOLD)

Ruby Walsh	56
Barry Geraghty	34
Sir A P McCoy	31
Pat Taaffe	25
Richard Johnson	22
Richard Dunwoody	18
Davy Russell	18
Charlie Swan	17
Fred Winter	17
Robert Thornton	16
Paul Carberry	14
Mick Fitzgerald	14
Peter Scudamore	13

The Irish Independent Leading Trainer Award At The Festival – Final 2017 Standings

Trainer	1st	2nd	3rd
Gordon Elliott IRE	6	3	3
Willie Mullins IRE	6	2	4
Nicky Henderson	3	6	4
Jessica Harrington IRE	3	-	-
Henry de Bromhead IRE	1	2	2
Philip Hobbs	1	1	1
Paul Nicholls	1	1	1
Noel Meade IRE	1	-	1
Stuart Edmunds	1	-	-
Alan Fleming IRE	1	-	-
Pat Kelly IRE	1	-	-
Ben Pauling	1	-	-
David Pipe	1	-	-
Nick Williams	1	-	-

The Irish Independent Leading Trainer Award is decided on the number of winners trained over the four days. If there is a tie, it will go down to the number of second places. If there is still a tie, the number of third places will be taken into account and the award will be shared if there remains a tie after that.

Winners Of The Irish Independent Leading Trainer Award

2017	Gordon Elliott IRE (6)
2016	Willie Mullins IRE (7)
2015	Willie Mullins IRE (8)
2014	Willie Mullins IRE (4)
2013	Willie Mullins IRE (5)
2012	Nicky Henderson (7)
2011	Willie Mullins IRE (4)
2010	Nicky Henderson (3)
2009	Paul Nicholls (5)
2008	Paul Nicholls (3)
2007	Paul Nicholls (4)
2006	Paul Nicholls (3)
2005	Howard Johnson (3)
2004	Paul Nicholls (4)
2003	Jonjo O'Neill (3)
2002	Martin Pipe (3)
2001	<i>Cancelled</i>
2000	Nicky Henderson (4)
1999	Paul Nicholls (3)
1998	Martin Pipe (4)
1997	Martin Pipe (4)
1996	Ferdy Murphy, Edward O'Grady IRE, Martin Pipe (2)
1995	David Nicholson (3)
1994	David Nicholson, Edward O'Grady IRE (2)
1993	Nicky Henderson, Martin Pipe, Nigel Twiston-Davies (2)
1992	Nicky Henderson, David Nicholson, Simon Sherwood (2)
1991	Martin Pipe (3)
1990	Nicky Henderson (2)
1989	Toby Balding, John Edwards, David Elsworth, Josh Gifford, Martin Pipe (2)
1988	Josh Gifford (3)
1987	Toby Balding, Nicky Henderson, Fred Winter (2)
1986	Nicky Henderson (3)
1985	Nicky Henderson (3)
1984	Michael Dickinson (3)
1983	Michael Dickinson (3)
1982	Michael Dickinson (3)
1981	Peter Easterby (3)
1980	John Edwards, Edward O'Grady IRE, Bob Turnell, Fred Winter (2)

Leading current owners at The Festival

Wins	Owner
52	J P McManus
19	Gigginstown House Stud
14	Susannah Ricci
13	Andrea & Graham Wylie
11	Trevor Hemmings
8	The Moulds
7	John Hales
7	Hammer & Trowel Syndicate
7	The Stewart Family
6	Jim Lewis
6	Terry Warner
5	Michael Buckey
5	Ann and Alan Potts
5	Clive Smith
5	Robert Waley-Cohen

The NetJets Leading Owner Award At The Festival – Final 2017 Standings

Owner	1st	2nd	3rd
Gigginstown House Stud	4	2	2
J P McManus	3	3	3
Andrea & Graham Wylie	2	-	1
Ann & Alan Potts	2	1	-
Paul & Clare Rooney	1	2	-
Susannah Ricci	1	1	2
Tony Bloom	1	-	-
Michael Buckley	1	-	-
Barry Connell	1	-	-
Maura Gittins	1	-	-
Jim Humberstone	1	-	-
Edward O'Connell	1	-	-
Aidan O'Ryan	1	-	-
Patricia Pugh	1	-	-
Sally Rowley-Williams	1	-	-
The Knot Again Partnership	1	-	-
Philip Reynolds	1	-	-
The Macaroni Beach Society	1	-	-
The Stewart Family	1	-	-
Prof Caroline Tisdall & Bryan Drew	1	-	-
Wicklow Bloodstock (Ireland) Ltd	1	-	-

The BetBright Prestbury Cup - Irish-trained successes at The Festival

2017-19* (28 races)	1995-4 (20 races)
2016-15 (28 races)	1994-3 (20 races)
2015-13 (27 races)	1993-6 (20 races)
2014-12 (27 races)	1992-2 (19 races)
2013-14 (27 races)	1991-2 (18 races)
2012-5 (27 races)	1990-2 (18 races)
2011-13 (27 races)	1989-0 (18 races)
2010-7 (26 races)	1988-1 (18 races)
2009-9 (26 races)	1987-1 (18 races)
2008-7 (25 races)	1986-4 (18 races)
2007-5 (24 races)	1985-2 (18 races)
2006-10 (24 races)	1984-4 (18 races)
2005-9 (24 races)	1983-5 (18 races)
2004-4 (20 races)	1982-6 (18 races)
2003-6 (20 races)	1981-3 (18 races)
2002-5 (20 races)	1980-4 (18 races)
2001-cancelled	1979-5 (18 races)
2000-3 (20 races)	1978-6 (12 races**)
1999-5 (20 races)	1977-7 (18 races)
1998-4 (20 races)	1976-5 (18 races)
1997-3 (20 races)	1975-5 (13 races***)
1996-7 (20 races)	

* Record, although The Festival was previously three days up until 2005. Prior to The Festival's extension to four days in 2005, the previous record was eight wins in 1958 (when 18 races were run).

** In 1978, the third day of The Festival was abandoned due to snow. The Triumph Hurdle and Gold Cup were subsequently run in April.

*** In 1975, waterlogging caused several races to be lost.

Captains Phil Tufnell and Ken Doherty announced for the 2018 Betbright Cup

Phil Tufnell and Ken Doherty have been appointed as captains of Great Britain and Ireland respectively ahead of the 2018 BetBright Cup.

The coveted trophy, awarded to the country with the greatest number of winners at The Festival, will determine who has the bragging rights for the next 12 months, something that Ireland has held throughout 2017.

Irish horses ruled the Gloucestershire turf at The Festival last year, delivering the British contingent with a crushing 19 – 9 defeat, despite Great Britain starting The Festival as favourites.

Rich Ricci, BetBright chairman, said: "The Festival is the horse racing event of the year, an exciting time for racing fans from both sides of the Irish Sea. The Irish contingent will be looking to retain the BetBright Cup for the second time and I am sure that the British trainers and horses will be wanting to avenge last year's heavy defeat.

"The BetBright Cup is a fun complement to the serious sport on the track, allowing racing fans to get behind their country's contenders throughout the week and this year we will be making a donation of £10,000 to the Injured Jockeys Fund on behalf of the winning captain".

Phil Tufnell, affectionately known as 'Tuffers', enjoyed an illustrious career with England before becoming a regular face on British TV as a captain on a Question of Sport, a contestant with two left feet on Strictly Come Dancing and King of the Jungle on I'm a Celebrity. The owner of numerous racehorses and a passionate Cheltenham fan, Phil is looking forward to taking Ken on and believes the GB team can reclaim the trophy that escaped them last year and in 2016.

Phil, said: "The Festival is my favourite sporting event of the year and I'm delighted to be captaining Great Britain again this year. Last year's defeat was almost as crushing as the England side in the Ashes, but I am predicting a resurgence of British winners and I can't see anything beyond a whitewash victory for the red, white and blue."

Ken Doherty is an Irish snooker player, commentator and radio presenter. As an amateur, Ken won the Irish Amateur Championship twice, the World Under-21 Amateur Championship and the World Amateur Championship. Turning professional in 1990, Doherty has won a total of six ranking tournaments including the 1997 World Snooker Championship. This made him the first, and so far one of only two players to have been world amateur and professional champion. An intelligent tactician and prolific break-builder, Doherty has compiled more than 300 century breaks in professional competition and now combines his playing career with commentating and punditry work.

Ken, said: "What a Festival it was last year, the trophy was heading across the Irish Sea before the last day of racing had finished and I can't see anything beyond another resounding victory for the Irish. The main man, Ruby Walsh, will be back from injury and I'm backing Faugheen to be the first 10-year-old or older since Sea Pigeon in 1981 to win the Champion Hurdle."

Images from the launch press conference and of the captains for the 2018 BetBright Cup can be downloaded here: <https://we.tl/fzY6LkGU6P>

For further information, please email betbright@havas.com

Latest odds from BetBright:

Ireland 8/11

Great Britain 6/4

Draw 8/1

Bonuses connected with The Festival

Iroquois Cheltenham Challenge

The terms of the Iroquois Cheltenham Challenge are simple: win the Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle at The Festival and the Iroquois Hurdle in Nashville, USA, in May, or vice versa, within a 12-month time span and gain a US\$500,000 bonus. With combined purses and bonus, a horse completing the Challenge could earn close to US\$1 million.

Launched in 2016 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Iroquois Steeplechase, the Challenge is an effort to re-establish the historical transatlantic racing rivalry.

Matchbook Imperial Cup

Matchbook, sponsor of the Imperial Cup at Sandown Park Racecourse, will award a £100,000 bonus (up from £50,000 in 2017) should the winner of the £75,000 handicap hurdle on March 10 go on to win any race at The Festival the following week.

The bonus will be split as follows: £60,000 to the winning owner, £20,000 to winning trainer, £10,000 to the winning yard, £10,000 to the winning jockey (split in half if two jockeys are involved)

Horses to have won this bonus in previous years are: Olympian (1993 Coral Cup), Blowing Wind (1998 Randox Health County Hurdle) and Gaspara (2007 Fred Winter Juvenile Hurdle).

Plumpton's SIS Cheltenham Bonus

Plumpton Racecourse continues to offer the £60,000 SIS Cheltenham Bonus, which goes to connections of a horse that wins one of five nominated novice chases at the course and is subsequently successful in any chase at The Festival.

The bonus will be split as follows: £50,000 to the winning owner, £5,000 to winning trainer, £5,000 to the winning yard

Voy Por Ustedes was the last horse to scoop the bonus, winning the Racing Post Arkle Novices' Chase at The Festival in 2006 after scoring at Plumpton earlier the same season.

This year's qualifying horses are: **Benatar** and **Eamon An Cnoic**

Nathaniel Lacy & Partners Stable Staff Bonus

Irish solicitors Nathaniel Lacy & Partners will provide a bonus of €50,000 to the stable staff at Joseph O'Brien's yard if **Tower Bridge** can follow up victory in the G1 Nathaniel Lacy & Partners Solicitors Novice Hurdle at Leopardstown on February 3 by winning any race at The Festival.

Tower Bridge is currently engaged in the G1 Ballymore Novices' Hurdle (1.30pm, Ladies Day, March 14).

Musical Acts playing at The Festival in 2018

Taylor & The Mason

Music's finest duo, now that Oxide and Neutrino have packed it in. Taylor & The Mason play lovely folk, with great lyrics and catchy hooks. Bringing innovative sounds created by just two guitars and two voices – one soulful and one with a stunning country twang and add to this their honest, lovely lyrics means you have a nicely presented musical package. From Manchester, they are Becky Taylor and Sally Mason.

The Lucky 15's

Whack fol the daddy-o! Manchester Irish band, The Lucky 15's, sure know how to get things started. Combining tales of love and woe, bravery and despair, along with songs from all of the five major drinks groups: lager, cider, bitter, ale and stout. Guitarist Josh sings all the right notes (sometimes in the right order) while Bob on the fiddle is second-to-none, and first to the bar. Expect Irish Jigs, Celtic Reels and toe-tapping tunes that will have you giddy with glee. You keep backing the winners, we'll keep singing the songs. Great craic!

The Chip Shop Boys

A regular act at Cheltenham Racecourse, The Festival wouldn't be the same without this superb group. Stuart Walby started the band 20 years ago around pubs and clubs in Cheltenham. Since then, he has added a team of amazing musicians and travelled the world performing at 1,000s of prestigious events, including several high-profile celebrity weddings. In 2014, they recorded a live album at the world famous Abbey Road Studios, London. Recently, they have been doing their usual high volume of UK shows and a live album at BBC's Maida Vale Studios, as well as a tour of the USA!

The Wickermen

Formed in Liverpool in 1993, The Wickermen have established themselves as one of the most in-demand cover bands on the UK circuit. The past 10 years has seen them travelling extensively both home and abroad, providing entertainment at many major corporate events, weddings and functions.

The Hipcats

The Hipcats are one of the country's leading jazz and swing bands and will be playing their fun brand of music at Cheltenham Racecourse with their special outdoor acoustic group. Away from Cheltenham Races, they can be found at weddings, corporate events and even Glastonbury Festival, with a line-up that can include vocals, drums, double bass, piano, jazz guitar, trumpet and saxophone. They are inspired by the likes of Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra and all the other jazz & swing greats. Give them a smile and a wave, clap your hands and tap your feet – they look forward to entertaining you.

The Fureys

Legends of Irish music & song The Fureys, renowned for their hit songs 'I will love you', 'When you were sweet 16', 'The green fields of France', 'The old man', 'Red rose café', 'From Clare to here', 'Her father didn't like me anyway', 'Leaving Nancy', 'Steal away' etc, perform throughout Ireland, UK and Continental Europe every year. The Fureys have been entertaining audiences worldwide for 39 years. The band was formed in 1978 literally by accident. George, Paul and Davey were playing in Denmark with their own band called the Buskers, while Eddie and Finbar, touring in Germany, were involved in a road accident. When George and Paul got news of the accident, they immediately travelled to Germany to be with their brothers. They then decided that they should all be playing together and this was the start of The Fureys.

All Folk'd Up

Formed by lead singer and accomplished banjo player Pauric Mohan back in 2009, during his days as a student of music in Dublin, the band quickly found themselves signed to a residency at the world famous Temple Bar and so it began! Word spread rapidly about the talented boys from Aughnacloy. Featuring the brilliant Daniel Doyle on flute and whistles, the baby of the band Stephen McElvogue on guitar and Szymon Dwulat on drums ALL FOLK'D UP take their audience on an unforgettable trip through decades of well-known classics, adding their own unique twist as well as their very own new modern originals.

Champions old and new in The Festival RoR Parade

- *Champion Hurdle, Champion Chase and Stayers' Hurdle winners in line-up*
- *Several Festival heroes already making their mark in new disciplines*
- *Parade again sponsored by the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust*

A new generation of retired racehorses and former Festival favourites feature in this year's Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) Parade, held on Champion Day, the opening day of The Festival at Cheltenham, Tuesday, March 13.

The parade, scheduled to start at 12.30pm, showcases the range of activities open to racehorses when they finish their racing careers and has become an increasingly popular attraction in the build-up to racing on the first day of the meeting.

The RoR Parade is again sponsored by the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust and among the former Cheltenham winners making their parade debut at The Festival are **Annacotty, Any Currency, Dodging Bullets** and **Hunt Ball**. All four horses have made encouraging starts to their new careers and are set to compete this year in a variety of classes staged exclusively for former racehorses by RoR.

There are also some familiar horses from past RoR parades, such as the former Champion Hurdle winner **Punjabi** and two old sparring partners in **Big Buck's** and **Barbers Shop**. The pair first met on the racecourse over 10 years ago when Big Buck's made his British debut in a novice chase at Newbury, winning by a neck from Barbers Shop. Subsequent to their illustrious racing careers, both Big Buck's and Barbers Shop have enjoyed fulfilling second careers in the hunting field and show ring respectively.

Another familiar name in the line-up is **Silviniaco Conti**, now in the care of Charlotte Alexander, who formerly looked after and rode Denman before his full-time retirement in 2017. Like Denman before him, Silviniaco Conti is enjoying hunting and team chasing and such has been his progress in the latter that he has been fast-tracked from novice to open classes.

There is also the wonderful story of the not un-aptly named **Back In Focus**, who despite the loss of an eye in a freak accident has subsequently adapted to a successful second career team chasing. Enormous credit must go to Back In Focus's rider Clare Burrows for taking on the former Willie Mullins trained Festival winner and giving the horse the opportunity to thrive in another discipline.

Scottish Grand National winner **Wayward Prince**, who is already competing in dressage classes, and **Wild West**, a maiden under rules but a champion among retrained racehorses, complete the line-up. Last August, Wild West was crowned ROA and Goffs UK Supreme Champion at the RoR National Championships and he also was awarded the 2017 RoR Elite Performance Award for Showing.

Hunt Ball will be ridden by Sarah Henderson, daughter of the horse's former trainer, Nicky Henderson, and she is looking forward to taking the horse back to Cheltenham in his new guise as a hunter.

Sarah Henderson said: "His owners Atlantic Equine very kindly asked if I would like to have him in his retirement. I was over the moon and Hunt Ball returned to Seven Barrows in June.

"Since our reunion nine months ago we have done some cross-country schooling, grid work and flat work to help retrain him for his new life as a hunter. However, it's not all been plain sailing, as hacking out at Seven Barrows on his own often proved a bit much, all he wanted to do was re-join the string. However, since we moved him to a livery yard in Kingston Lisle, he has really blossomed.

"We've been hunting with both the Old Berks and Vine & Craven and when he is out he loves watching hounds. Hunt Ball is hugely intelligent with an abundance of character and this year, after the Cheltenham parade, I am aiming to do some RoR classes and perhaps even a one-day event with him, but our shared number one passion remains hunting."

Di Arbuthnot, Chief Executive of RoR, added: "It's wonderful how popular the RoR Parades have become and our sincere thanks to Cheltenham for providing the opportunity for the public to see how well these retired racehorses have adapted to a second career.

"Special thanks also to the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust for their generous support as sponsors of the RoR Parades and Musical Ride for 2018."

The full line-up for the 2018 RoR Parade at Cheltenham, sponsored by the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust, is as follows:

1. Annacotty (Showing and show jumping) – ridden by Hannah Bishop

10-year-old by Beneficial, formerly trained by Alan King and Martin Keighley

Annacotty provided his owner Liz Prowting with her first Grade 1 win, as well as three memorable victories at Cheltenham, including the 2015 Paddy Power Gold Cup. The decision was taken to retire him last year and since then he has been busy being retrained by Hannah Bishop, Racing Manager to Mrs Prowting. He has adapted well to his second career, even being ridden side-saddle, and the long-term aim is to compete in working hunter classes, starting with some RoR Challenge classes this season.

2. Any Currency (Show jumping) – ridden by Harley Cornock

15-year-old by Moscow Society, formerly trained by Martin Keighley

A Cheltenham specialist whose feats include being first past the post in the Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase at the 2016 Festival, Any Currency retired from racing in April, 2017. Now in the care of Harley Cornock, Any Currency has been retraining in show jumping, which he thoroughly enjoys. He recently started competing at British Novice level and the aim is to qualify for the RoR Bronze League final at the National Championships held at Stoneleigh.

3. Barbers Shop (Showing) – ridden by Chris Hunnable

16-year-old by Saddlers' Hall, formerly trained by Nicky Henderson

Owned by HM The Queen, since his retirement from racing in 2012, Barbers Shop has been with Katie Jerram and under her schooling he became one of the leading former racehorses to compete in showing classes. Among his many successes was victory at the Hickstead Derby Final and three times winner and champion at Royal Windsor Horse Show. He is now retired from competitive showing.

4. Back in Focus (Team chasing) – ridden by Clare Burrows

13-year-old by Bob Back, formerly trained by Willie Mullins

On the track Back In Focus won a Grade 1 and the 2013 running of the National Hunt Chase, however, a freak accident in 2015 fractured his cheekbone and resulted in him losing an eye, ending his racing career. Clare Burrows took on Back In Focus in December, 2016 and the lack of an eye has not impeded his second career. The pair are now regulars on the team chasing circuit, competing at intermediate level for the 'Why Nots'. He also hunts regularly with both the Fitzwilliam Hunt and the Cambridge University Drag Hounds.

5. Big Buck's (Hunting) – ridden by Lucy Felton

15-year-old by Cadoudal, formerly trained by Paul Nicholls

Winner of the Stayers' Hurdle a record four times, Big Buck's retired from racing in 2014 with a career record of 23 wins from 40 starts and prize money earnings of £1.3m. He still enjoys a day's hunting with Lucy Felton and the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale, as well as accompanying her children and their ponies on rides.

6. Dodging Bullets (Dressage and Showjumping) ridden by Lucy Sharp

10-year-old by Dubawi, formerly trained by Paul Nicholls

The pinnacle of Dodging Bullets' racing career was victory in the 2015 Queen Mother Champion Chase, giving his owners Martin Broughton and friends a day to remember. During his six-year spell with Paul Nicholls, Dodging Bullets was looked after by Lucy Sharp and Lucy is now retraining him for a second career following his retirement in 2017. Lucy has been doing plenty of flat work on him and is looking forward to competing in RoR dressage and show jumping events.

7. Hunt Ball (Hunting) ridden by Sarah Henderson

13-year-old by Winged Love, formerly trained by Kieran Burke and Nicky Henderson

In the 2011-12 season Hunt Ball won seven races, including victory at The Festival, and his handicap rating rose a remarkable 85lb, from a mark of 69 to 154. In June, 2017 Hunt Ball was retired and given to Sarah Henderson, primarily as a hunter. The pair have been hunting this season with both the Old Berks and Vine & Craven and Sarah reports that he loves watching hounds and is very intelligent. They are aiming to do some RoR classes and perhaps a one-day event, along with their shared number one passion, hunting.

8. Punjabi (Hunting and hunter trials) – ridden by Rachael Kempster

15-year-old by Komaite, formerly trained by Nicky Henderson and David Pipe

Winner of the 2009 Champion Hurdle, Punjabi retired in 2013 and moved to Kinsale Stud, Shropshire. Under Rachael Kempster Punjabi has competed in unaffiliated dressage competitions as well as going hunting. Due to on-going arthritis in his hock from a previous injury, Punjabi has had to switch his attention from dressage to hunter trials. His enthusiasm for galloping and jumping has not waned and his next outing will be in a pairs' hunter trial at the end of March.

9. Silviniaco Conti (Team chasing) – ridden by Charlotte Alexander

12-year-old by Dom Alco, formerly trained by Paul Nicholls

During an illustrious racing career, Silviniaco Conti won seven Grade 1 races, including two King George VI Chases and over £1.1m in prize money. Since his retirement in 2017, Silviniaco Conti has been team chasing and has already progressed from novice to open classes. He has also been hunting and his other love is being a stock horse, rounding up the sheep on the farm! His rider, Charlotte Alexander, hopes to take him eventing this summer and she credits Brian Hutton at the Talland School of Equitation for helping her nurture Conti's potential in his second career.

10. Wayward Prince – (Dressage and hunting) ridden by Megan Harper

14-year-old by Alflora, formerly trained by Ian Williams and Hilary Parrott

Winner of the 2015 Scottish Grand National and a Grade 2 chase, Wayward Prince was also third in the 2012 RSA Chase. Retired after winning the 2015 Scottish National, he is now at livery with Martin Jones, who broke him in, and is ridden by Martin's Head Girl Megan Harper. He has been hunting and competing in various classes, recently qualifying for the RoR dressage championships (preliminary level). He will be aimed at the RoR dressage and eventing leagues this summer.

11. Wild West (Showing) – ridden by Lizzie Harris

10-year-old by Galileo, formerly trained by Jonjo O'Neill

Despite being in training first with Aidan O'Brien and then Jonjo O'Neill, where he was ridden by A P McCoy, Wild West remained a maiden under Rules. However, he has enjoyed great success in his second career. The highlight was being crowned Supreme Champion at the RoR National Championships in 2017, when ridden side-saddle by Lizzie Harris. He is a very versatile horse, having also hunted, team chased and evented. In the show ring, his victories include the RoR Tattersalls Championship at Hickstead in 2015 and 2017 and he was the winner of the 2017 RoR Elite Performance Award for Showing.

Dom Joly Gets 'Cheltenham Ready' for The Festival 2018

This year Cheltenham Racecourse has teamed up with one Cheltenham local who has decided if you can't beat them join them in his quest to become Cheltenham ready. Dom Joly, local resident and best known as the star of Trigger Happy TV, has filmed three episodes of a four-part series where he discovers how to get ready for The Festival.

The first episode follows Dom to London where he visits tailors, Dress 2 Kill, who are on hand to advise on what Dom should wear to the races. With the help of SKY Sports presenter Rachel Wyse, he chooses his tweed outfit that he will wear on Ladies Day, Wednesday, March 14.

Dom admits he is horse savvy, but when it comes to knowing much about horse racing and understanding racing terminology and jargon this is where he stumbles.

On Saturday, January 27, Festival Trials Day, Dom visited trainer Fergal O'Brien to meet three horses who were racing that day.

Getting up ridiculously early (his words!), Dom met Fergal at the yard where he went to the gallops, had a tour of the stables and chatted to a leading rider, Sam Twiston-Davies, who gave Dom an insight into life as a jockey, while Fergal told him about life as a trainer and most importantly the chances of the three horses running that afternoon at Cheltenham.

Sounding the part, Dom later at the racecourse met with bookmaker Simon Wallis of White Sunderland, who gave him a quick guide into betting. Visiting the weighing room Dom saw the jockeys who had just been weighed out for their race.

The day proved to be very insightful to Dom and he admitted he was actually starting to enjoy himself and getting into the swing of The Festival™.

The final episode will be filmed on Ladies Day, dressed in his new racing outfit, Dom will walk the course before racing and even try and enter the #ColourMeMarch competition to win a mini (this is only open to Ladies!). Dom will get tips on the best places to eat and drink, where to watch the races and enjoy the start of the day in the Guinness Village.

Dom Joly said: "Living so close to The Festival, it's great that I finally get a chance to get an insider's view of the affair. I'm enjoying the experience greatly."

To watch the series, please visit www.thefestival.co.uk/domjoly

Boodles launches new jewellery collection exclusively for The Festival 2018

Racing Exclusive - Boodles, the leading British fine jeweller, has developed a three-piece capsule collection, exclusively for, and on sale at, The Festival.

The Festival takes place next week, from Tuesday, March 13 to Friday, March 16 at Cheltenham Racecourse.

The small, limited edition capsule collection, named 'Spirit', features an abstract horse motif pendant set in 18 carat white gold with diamonds, and a horseshoe bracelet.

'Spirit' aims to capture the essence of a thoroughbred horse in motion through elegant and simple fine jewellery designs.

Boodles has been a partner at The Festival since 2014, when it first supported the 'Leading Jockey Award' and a recent three-year race sponsorship announcement takes the partnership duration to seven years.

Rebecca Hawkins, Head of Design at Boodles, said: "We are delighted to have created 'Spirit' as a Cheltenham exclusive.

"The horse is a symbol of freedom, and the design employs a minimalist use of lines for maximum impact."

Carey Weeks, Regional Head of Partnerships at Cheltenham Racecourse and The Jockey Club South West, commented: "We are so excited for our racegoers to see these beautiful items at The Festival next week.

"It just shows what a great partnership this is."

Boodles will be based in the in the tented village at The Festival and is sponsoring the Boodles Fred Winter Juvenile Handicap Hurdle (4.50pm) on Ladies Day, Wednesday, March 14.

The small pendant will retail at £2,600 and the large at £4,350 with the bracelet retailing at £7,800.

ITV Racing: The Festival 2018 Live

ITV Sport

*Live coverage from 1pm on Tuesday March 13, 2018 on ITV
The Opening Show from 9.30am on Tuesday March 13, 2018 on ITV4*

This is an ITV Sport production for ITV

“Cheltenham brings the season to such a brilliant crescendo, which makes it the envy of so many other sports, in one of the best amphitheatres in sport. Everyone wants to win there.” - Ed Chamberlin, presenter

Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani host exclusive free to air coverage of the first major National Hunt festival of the year live from the Home of Jump Racing, Cheltenham.

ITV's coverage will showcase the very best of the action on the turf and all the colour The Festival has to offer from the Cotswolds' racecourse, where horses and their jockeys will battle it out for prize money of over £4.6 million.

The channel's coverage features 18 hours' live footage, taking in five races per day, going behind the scenes at the course, featuring interviews with key jockeys, trainers and racing legends, sampling the atmosphere in the grandstands, all leading up to the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup on Friday afternoon.

Joining Ed and Francesca for expert analysis are Sir A P McCoy, Luke Harvey and Mick Fitzgerald, with reporting from Oli Bell and Alice Plunkett. Matt Chapman will have the latest betting news, and Brian Gleeson will provide an Irish angle on the action.

It's the first time Francesca has presented for ITV live from Cheltenham, and with an expanded role, she will appear on the channel's live coverage of all the major racing festivals this year.

Additionally, Lucy Verasamy will provide essential weather forecasts, expert Eva O'Donoghue will give her views from a veterinary perspective and Richard Hoiles will be in the commentary box throughout.

Former ITV Racing presenter Brough Scott also returns to bring his analysis and unique perspective to the festival.

On the opening day, the feature race is the Unibet Champion Hurdle. Last year's winner Buveur D'Air is a warm favourite to give master trainer Nicky Henderson another win in the race.

Wednesday's feature race is the Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase, in which one of the equine stars of the sport, Altior will line up as he looks to win at The Festival for a third year in a row after wins in the 2016 Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle and the 2017 Racing Post Arkle Chase.

On Thursday viewers will be treated to a brace of Grade One Features. The Sun Bets Stayers' Hurdle is the ultimate prize over the smaller obstacles for those horses in need of a longer trip, while the Ryanair Chase is the newest of the major championship races at The Festival, having been introduced in 2005 when the event was expanded from three days to four.

And on Friday, the highlight of The Festival is the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup in which 2017 winner Sizing John returns to defend his crown, but he faces stiff opposition, with his fiercest challenge likely to come from King George winner Might Bite.

Alongside ITV's coverage, 60-minute editions of The Opening Show, presented by Oli Bell, will air on ITV4 every morning throughout The Festival to preview each day's action.

The Festival will see the introduction of ITV Racing's Social Stable - a social media hub also hosted by Oli Bell, based at the track, which will be linked to all the channel's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram profiles and will be incorporated into the channel's live programming.

The ITV Racing app has been given a refresh ahead of The Festival where viewers can take part in on-air polls, take tricky quizzes and watch clips from all of the live races as well as loads of extra video content. The popular ITV7 competition will also return ahead of The Festival, bigger and better than ever.

ITV's live coverage at The Festival will also be simulcast on the ITV Hub, on web and app, for viewers to watch online, and our responsively-designed ITV Racing site - itv.com/racing – helping bring The Festival to life.

The ITV Racing Twitter account will feature clips during each of the channel's broadcasts, and the ITV Sport YouTube page will feature daily YouTube Live broadcasts with the ITV Racing team and guests.

In 2017, racing returned to ITV for the first time in 32 years, in a new four-year deal to show UK horse racing on terrestrial television encompassing live broadcasts of almost 100 days of racing each year - including 42 days on the main channel.

Cheltenham is the first major festival in ITV's calendar, which includes the Grand National, the Epsom Derby, and all the other major festivals including Royal Ascot, plus other highlights such as Future Champions Day at Newmarket and Champions Day at Ascot.

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Ed Chamberlin

When did you first come to the Cheltenham Festival and what's your favourite personal memory of The Festival?

My first visit to Cheltenham was in 1993 to see Jodami win the Gold Cup and it became an annual pilgrimage thereafter. Last year was a totally different experience presenting The Festival on ITV for the first time and my favourite memory has to be my first Champion Hurdle, with Sir Anthony McCoy interviewing J P McManus on our podium reminiscing on 50 Cheltenham Festival winners.

What in your view makes the Cheltenham Festival so magical?

It's the way it brings the season to such a brilliant crescendo, which makes it the envy of so many other sports, in one of the best amphitheatres in sport. Everyone wants to win at Cheltenham. Add in the British and Irish rivalry and you have sporting theatre at its best.

Have you got any tips for which horses, jockeys and trainers will do well this week?

Willie Mullins and Ruby Walsh have been the dominant force in recent years, but in the jockeys' ranks this season there's been a changing of the guard with the Bowen brothers and Bryony Frost starring on many an ITV Saturday. Winning on the biggest stage will be the next step. However, Un De Sceaux is a certainty in the Ryanair for Mullins and Walsh!

Any dark horses emerging from the pack which you can tip to win at Cheltenham?

Keep an eye out for Tiger Roll in the Cross-Country Chase.

What will be your personal highlight of The Festival, on or off the turf?

It will be fun to have Francesca Cumani presenting The Festival alongside me for the first time. There will be stories galore, but the thrill of presenting a Gold Cup will take some beating.

Who do you think will win the Gold Cup and why?

Might Bite is the one they all have to beat. He's the improver in the field who has done nothing wrong this season. We know he goes well round Cheltenham after his performance in the RSA last year, which would have been an absolute rout had he not taken a detour toward the Guinness Village. That kink looks to have been ironed out and I'm confident Might Bite has the best engine in the field.

Francesca Cumani

What are you most looking forward to about the Cheltenham Festival?

The Cheltenham Festival is renowned the world over as being the most enjoyable week of racing you can experience and with an atmosphere like no other. It has been a while since I last attended and I can't wait to be back there.

Do you have any memories from visiting Cheltenham previously which stand out?

What really stood out for me about Cheltenham and set it apart from many race meetings especially those on the Flat is that reception that the winning horses are greeted with when they come back into the winner's enclosure. There seems to be a great admiration for the horses and the racing public can really get behind them because they can tend to race for multiple seasons.

What did you learn working with the ITV Racing team last year that will put you in good stead for your extended role this year?

The most important thing I learned is that at ITV Racing there is a great camaraderie amongst the whole team, both in front and behind the cameras. Everybody is working hard to make the show a success and to help to make the sport grow in popularity and the best bit is that we all genuinely love racing and would talk about it till we were blue in the face anyway! I'm looking forward to immersing myself in The Festival fever and hopefully helping to make it really enjoyable for everybody watching at home.

Can you give us a taste of what it's like behind the scenes at a major festival?

When you are involved in the broadcast of a major festival, it's a very exciting place to be. As a lifetime lover of racing and horses in particular it's a huge honour to be right in the thick of things, conveying the action as it happens. There is plenty of preparation and study time in the lead-up which serves to make each race more exciting because you can't wait to see which horses are going to emerge victorious. Personally, I like finding out the stories behind each horse and their connections because it gives a race more context and it gives viewers at home a better connection with the main players.

Who do you think will win the Gold Cup and why?

He's the current favourite and I tend to try to avoid tipping favourites, but Might Bite has a really good chance of winning and I confess to being completely seduced by the name. I wonder how many visitors to Nicky Henderson's stable have given him a wide berth thinking it's a warning and not a name on his door!

Oli Bell

When did you first come to the Cheltenham Festival and what's your favourite personal memory of The Festival?

My first memory of going to Cheltenham was when Best Mate won his third Gold Cup. It's the pinnacle of the sport and for a horse to win the race three times was an incredible achievement. The celebrations when he won were unreal in every bar on the course! My personal highlight though was when Ruby Walsh won his 50th race as a jockey at The Festival on Black Hercules, I'd had a decent bet on him and was pretty happy when he won!

What in your view makes the Cheltenham Festival so magical?

Cheltenham is a bit of a pilgrimage for racing fans. The atmosphere is incredible not just for a racing arena, but it's comparable to any great sport events - there is a conversation, a buzz, an excitement wherever you turn. You can't help but absorb the enjoyment everyone is getting out of the whole experience.

What are you most looking forward to about this jump season?

This Cheltenham we could see something special from Altior who is unbeaten over obstacles and I think Might Bite could produce a bit of magic in the Gold Cup.

Have you got any tips for which horses, jockeys and trainers will do well this week?

The Festival has been dominated in recent years by Willie Mullins and Ruby Walsh, but keep an eye out for the trainer Nicky Henderson and jockey Nico de Boinville - they've got some big fancies and could have a successful week.

Any dark horses emerging from the pack which you can tip to win at Cheltenham?

There is a horse at a massive price of 25/1 in a handicap called the Coral Cup who goes by the name of Le Breuil that I think will go very close. He's trained by a young trainer called Ben Pauling who knows how to celebrate a winner; if he wins the party won't stop.

What will be your personal highlight of The Festival, on or off the turf?

My highlight will be presenting The Festival to the ITV audience. It's a bit cheesy I know, but having the opportunity to broadcast the sport to millions of people watching at home is something I'm excited about. It's a fantastic sport and the perfect occasion to showcase all it can offer.

Who do you think will win the Gold Cup and why?

Might Bite will win the Gold Cup. He's the best horse in the race by quite some way in my opinion and he'll be able to give his trainer Nicky Henderson a third Gold Cup! It'll be a great race!

Matt Chapman

When did you first come to the Cheltenham Festival and what's your favourite personal memory of The Festival?

My first experience of Cheltenham was as a news reporter for the Racing Post back in the late '90s. The passion for jumps racing there is infectious. There is no doubt the most exciting Cheltenham finish I have ever seen was Big Strand beating Allegation in the 1997 Coral Cup. Out of shot jumping the last, the Aussie Jamie Evans got him home by a short-head. Even now it's impossible to believe he would win. A P McCoy was on Allegation. He must have been miffed!

What in your view makes the Cheltenham Festival so magical?

Passion. Knowledge. Competition. Desire. Expectation.

What are you most looking forward to about this jump season?

Jesus Christ appearing in the shape of Samcro. It's been a long time since we have seen him. And now he's back!

Have you got any tips for which horses, jockeys and trainers will do well this week?

Footpath, Samcro and Apple's Jade should all win. Davy Russell is a master at Cheltenham. Nicky Henderson, Gordon Elliott and Willie Mullins should dominate.

Any dark horses emerging from the pack which you can tip to win at Cheltenham?

Moon Racer could be interesting in the County. He was tailed off on his return, but ran up the run-in strongly out of most people's sight!

What will be your personal highlight of The Festival, on or off the turf?

It's my second year at Cheltenham for ITV and I'll be really busy on and off camera, so just being amongst it with the punters and the horses again will be my highlight.

Who do you think will win the Gold Cup and why?

I have tipped up Native River at 12/1 and Our Duke at 16/1.