



*Our leading tribute to Lorna, beautifully written by our former President Brough Scott articulates perfectly the deep sadness all of us at the IJF have felt since the loss of Lorna and our heart goes out to her family and many friends.*

*The following articles were all written prior to Lorna's fall and I hope that they will lead you on the rehabilitation journey which we offer to jockeys and longer-term beneficiaries when they make contact with us - Lisa Hancock*

## Lorna Brooke - a tribute

*The following tribute was written by Brough Scott for The Times and kindly reproduced.*

**How can you love a game that does this to its most devoted? That is the brutal question but be sure that "love" was in Lorna's answer.**

She adored the game. It lit up her life for 20 years. It had taken her across the world. It had even granted her that never-to-be-forgotten day at Fairyhouse in November 2015 when she and Moonlone Lane came home clear of Lizzie Kelly in second, Katie Walsh in third, and our Cheltenham and Grand National heroine Rachael Blackmore in 4<sup>th</sup>. All of them know well the question and you can guess that they and Lorna would have the same response.

For to ride a galloping thoroughbred over fences is a thrill like no other. Beneath you is half a ton of purpose bred athlete which is the equivalent of a jumping motorbike with its own mind which when perfectly blended makes you nothing short of an actual centaur. You can gallop towards a four and a half foot of fence at 30 miles an hour and leave it soaringly beneath you. On the best of days the bells ring in your head as it happens again and again. On a bad one? Well, yes, that can happen too.

The fact that death comes about so rarely does not remove the awareness. Everyone will have their memories. Seared into my consciousness is an afternoon almost 60 years back at Chepstow when Freddie Dixon took the sort of deadly jack-knife fall which winces into your eyeballs. 40 years ago last Saturday 54 year old amateur John Thorne chased Bob Champion home in the Grand National. A year

later, a fall in a Point-to-Point killed him. He too, and all of those of us who loved him, have to answer the question.

For riding over jumps means falling over them too. That also sears deep into the consciousness. One moment you are a soaring centaur, the next it is as if some tripwire is pulled and you are whacked into the turf with hoofs and bodies around you. Most of the time you roll clear and get up to shake yourself ready. Sometimes you lie with the wind knocked out wondering if there will ever be another breath. Sometimes you know at once that a limb is broken. Yes, sometimes it could be worse.

But facing up to risks enhances one's hold on existence. Knowing that they are there is important, for it gives every ride, every race that extra feel of fulfilment. Long before you get to the racetrack there are hard hours, bad weather, painful bumps, hungry days and ugly mouthed as well as well as sweet tempered horses. But then there are the jockeys silks, the paddock pantomime, the hack to the start, the goggles pulled down, the tapes fly up and you and your rivals are the only being alive in the spinning, galloping, jumping, crashing, straining world that is the race.

Of course non-believers will still think race riding a form of madness but for Lorna and the rest of us it's best to resort to those famous lines from Longfellow :

*"Ask not, the helmsman answered, the secrets of the sea. Only those that have braved its dangers, can comprehend its mystery."*

**She adored the game.  
It lit up her life  
for 20 years.**



## CEO

Injured Jockey Fund

# Lisa Hancock



**As a small charity we have the ability to offer individual support to those in need and we aim to involve all members of our multi-disciplinary team as appropriate. I am extremely proud of the level of expertise which we are now able to offer and believe that the provision available is as good as any sport provides.**

The whole team have worked tirelessly throughout the extended period of COVID and with racing continuing throughout we have found our Welfare Liaison team and three Rehabilitation Centres to be busier than ever.

One jockey who will be much missed on the racecourses by the IJF team is Richard Johnson. Richard has, in numerous ways been a quiet but hugely valued supporter of the IJF since he first gained his Point-to-Point licence in 1994. Always willing to help whenever he had time, Richard has represented us in many fundraising events including eventer challenges at Barbury Castle, showjumping competitions at Olympia and many, many more – nothing was ever too much trouble and we are incredibly grateful for his backing.

Finally, I would thank you all for your support. As an independent charity we work hard to stay true to our origins and our team are all committed to offering the very best support that we possibly can.

## Richard Johnson retires from his fabulous career

**The jumps season that has just finished brought an end to the long and hugely successful career of Richard Johnson, who decided the time was right to retire. We're glad to say he never needed our support over the years but he has been a long-term supporter and was kind enough to speak about the importance of the IJF for our newsletter.**

"It's an amazing organisation," Richard said. "Even as a child, I knew people who were beneficiaries. Andrew James, a farrier who used to shoe my ponies, unfortunately broke his neck in a Point-to-Point. The Injured Jockeys Fund helped him then and still do. That's obviously been over a huge period of time. For him and his wife and children, they've been a great support.

"They're there for everybody but also they're there forever, it's not just: here's a bit of help and then leave people to it. They really do look after people.

"It's a cause that's close to all our hearts and unfortunately there's always people who need their support - and not just financial support, it's emotional support as well, for the whole family. It's easy for me to say but to actually put that into practice is a huge commitment and it's one the IJF carries out really well.

"We're very fortunate in the racing industry to have that behind us. I mention Andrew because he's someone I know well but unfortunately there's cases like that all over the country."

Much has changed in the 27 years since Richard started race-riding and the IJF has made a great deal of progress in that time, notably setting up three rehabilitation centres around the country. "I've still got horses at home and if I have a bump and I need some help, I know that I can go to Oaksey House in Lambourn and get support. Whether you're a current jockey or an ex-jockey, to have that sort of facility, I don't think there's any other equestrian discipline that has that behind it. There's a safety net there.

"It's come on in leaps and bounds. To keep those three centres going is a real undertaking. That's another reason why we have to make sure that when there's a fundraiser, we should all be involved in trying to support it. It's gone from selling Christmas cards and calendars to being this huge organisation. There's lots of people who donate and we're very grateful to all of them."





## Dr Jerry Hill

### Racing's Chief Medical Adviser

**Jerry works for the British Horseracing Authority and is best known to jockeys as the man who must pass them fit before they can return to earning their living. He has also had a long-term involvement in football, including as a member of the FA's medical committee.**

The BHA regulates around 200 racecourse medical staff, setting the standards to which they work and ensuring they are sufficiently qualified. Jerry summarises his own involvement with injured jockeys by saying: "I look after them, remotely for the most part, from the time they hit the ground through their hospital stay, until the point when they're ready to be handed over to the IJF rehabilitation team.

"If you're a jockey who falls off, you'll be assessed by a doctor or paramedic. The requirement is that they must reach you within a minute of you hitting the ground, to start the assessment process. That's why we chase the field where the layout allows.

"Any jockey who has to go to hospital after a fall, the racecourse team will let me know, more or less as it's happening. As far as possible, I will text, call or WhatsApp the jockey, just to touch base.

"Some hospitals don't appreciate the speed and forces involved in coming off a horse. I want to make sure that when the jockey has that conversation with the hospital doctor, the doctor will understand what the forces involved are."

A risk, associated with the cultural stoicism of jockeys, is that the full extent of their injuries can sometimes be missed at first assessment. "If a jockey says to me, 'It stings a bit', that's a significant injury," Jerry says. "Unfortunately, we get some injuries that are missed because the jockey wasn't complaining about pain. So they go home and I talk to them and they go back to hospital to have their fracture diagnosed."

Once a jockey is in the IJF's care, Jerry keeps in touch to discuss their case with our staff at least once a week. "I will be involved remotely with their care. Consultant letters will tend to come to me and clearly I will share those with the rehabilitation team. Early on, we begin planning the return to sport and working out what parameters they're going to need to reach.

**"From the time a jockey hits the deck, the IJF is making contact with the jockey or the family, being there to support them..."**

"We're lucky to have a relatively small cohort of athletes and they're pretty well resourced in the rehabilitation facilities available to them, so we can individualise care to a large extent."

Jerry is happy with the interplay between his team and the IJF's, and is especially thankful for the IJF's rehabilitation process, returning jockeys to the track in good condition, as soon as it can be done. They are indispensable," he says.

"If I was trying to manage the return to sport, having to use NHS services or a network of independent private practitioners, it would be a much harder job. The coordination would be less good, jockeys would be off for longer, they wouldn't have that sport-specific rehabilitation. All the things we're trying to reduce, like poor performance, recurrent injury, risk to others, would be much more significant issues. They are completely invaluable and not to have them around would be disastrous. I'm not sure how we'd replace them. The only way you could do it would be every jockey having very high-level private medical insurance, which would be prohibitively expensive, to make sure we could plug the gap in some way. Our athletes would be much worse off without them."

## Dr Anna-Louise MacKinnon

### Head of Clinical Services

**Now in her second stint with the IJF, Anna-Louise is a consultant in sports and exercise medicine with the NHS. A key part of her work for us involves chairing the multi-disciplinary team meetings that take place at each centre every week, at which the expertise of all our staff is gathered in the cause of helping our beneficiaries get better.**

The meetings usually include physiotherapists, strength coaches, rehabilitation therapists, a clinical psychologist and the Centre and Regional Liaisons. Nutritionists can be called upon as needed.

That range of talents then apply themselves to the cases of 15 to 20 patients per centre each week. "What you want to do," Anna-Louise says, "is make the most of all the different perspectives you have and make sure everyone's got involvement. We run through all the professional jockeys and amateurs who are currently using the Centres, also any beneficiaries who are coming in to the Centres.

"If we take the case of a professional jockey, we have a spreadsheet so that we know when they were injured, how old they are, where they've been treated, who's been treating them, which physiotherapist is leading their care, whether or not we've involved the psychologist, when we're planning to get them back racing and roughly where they are in their rehabilitation.

**"I really hope that jockeys nowadays do not feel they're left on their own when they're injured."**

"The liaison has an opportunity to chip in and say, they're a bit worried about X, he maybe isn't claiming all his benefits or there's a problem with the family. If they're not progressing with rehabilitation, others can flag it up; should we be upping their rehabilitation or having a review or sending them away for a couple of weeks? We can change direction if we need to.

"Everyone comes with a different perspective. How a patient presents to a male member of the team can be quite different to a female member. Sometimes, particularly with hands-on therapy, people open up quite a lot." It is not uncommon for a physiotherapist to hear of a problem that might be best handled by a different member of the team.

"From the time a jockey hits the deck, the IJF is making contact with the jockey or the family, being there to support them in whatever way they need during their time in hospital, from an holistic point of view - do they need their mobile phone, are they miles away from their family, do they have some pyjamas?

"Then there's a really smooth transition into rehabilitation. As soon as the medical team is happy for them to do some active rehabilitation, the centre teams will be in touch. They will literally get whatever they need right up to the point where they're ready to return to race-riding."

"The team will assess them and see whether they're fit to return safely, working with the BHA to make sure that's done at the right point. They'll cover everything, including the financial aspect, psychological support, the medical support and make sure everything works.

"I really hope that jockeys nowadays do not feel they're left on their own when they're injured. They have top-quality support. We're not the Premier League but we would strive to be that, while being very aware that we're a charity and we have to be careful about how we spend our money. We need to be cutting-edge. These are professional athletes trying to get back to work."

## Head of Operations

at Peter O'Sullivan House

# Debbie Grey



**Having joined us last summer, Debbie is based at Peter O'Sullivan House and heads up our Liaison team, which provides the human connection between our facilities and those who may benefit from them. "The remit," she says, "is to provide bespoke support that truly meets an individual's needs... personalised, tailored to where a person is right now. It's a big team effort."**

A key part of Debbie's work is making sure jockeys past and present know what the IJF can do for them. "We had a 'wellness week' during the short break that the Flat jockeys had, with really good engagement and take-up at all our centres. They met the centre liaison and had a chat with them about all the services available, they came into a gym session, we had a Wattbike competition and nutritionists giving out recipes.

"It was really interesting for us to see how many people knew of all the services on offer. Even more importantly, quite a few of them have booked one-to-ones for the nutritional advice and for psychological support. It's so important to get people into a healthy mindset and recognising that their physical and mental wellbeing are closely aligned.

"We're going to put a WhatsApp group together for all the lead valets, so we can get them to promote our services. We are going to be establishing a network of racing secretaries, making sure they have all the information. Jockeys respond really well to Instagram and short, small bites of information tend to go down really well with them."

Debbie is especially pleased with the connection the IJF can form with young jockeys, who spend time with representatives of the charity as part of their licensing courses. "We're talking to them right from the word go about mental health, nutrition, keeping fit outside of racing.

"Talking about jockeys as elite athletes still feels quite new for us as an industry. Ludicrous as it sounds, I don't think they've always thought of themselves like that. You think of the support that other sports give their athletes... we're talking to lots of people outside our industry and benchmarking ourselves against those that we think offer a gold standard."

Keeping in touch with retired jockeys is also a key part of the IJF's mission and Debbie is full of ideas about how best to make that work. "We're developing a digital drop-in service, because Covid has highlighted that a lot of our beneficiaries' digital skills are not what they could be.

"Even for things like accessing universal credit, you can't do it without an email address. Most doctors, you're having to access your appointment online, you rebook your prescriptions online, which often isn't available to people who don't have the know-how.

"Each centre is going to have a morning, maybe Thursday 10am to 12pm, so come in with your questions or phone us. If you can't Facetime your grandchild, bring us your phone or your tablet and we'll teach you how to do it. We cover things like staying safe online and recognising scams. I think it's going to be crucial for our beneficiaries in the future to have better skills and to be more confident about using a computer.

**"It was really interesting for us to see how many people knew of all the services on offer..."**

"We've instituted a new Facebook group, the IJF beneficiaries group, and we've held things like a Cheltenham preview night, quizzes, virtual bingo, virtual coffee mornings, fun competitions and so on. That's on a weekly basis. We have a monthly Beneficiary Bulletin which goes out to all our beneficiaries.

"We're going to have a Goodwood hog roast on 30<sup>th</sup> July, inviting beneficiaries to come and join us and try to get some local artists to play some music while we all watch an afternoon of racing together." As lockdown restrictions ease, the Welfare Team plans to restart coffee mornings and group dog walks.

Ten months into her new role, she is relishing the chance to make a difference. "I feel enormously grateful to have my job, I absolutely love it. The whole of the IJF is a wonderful organisation to work in."







# Duncan Law

Consultant Psychologist

at Peter O'Sullivan House

**Duncan is a consultant psychologist with the organisation Changing Minds, which has been working with the Injured Jockeys Fund for around a year. He is based at Peter O'Sullivan House for one day each week and has colleagues doing similar work at our other centres.**

"A typical day," he says, "would be doing some direct work with jockeys and beneficiaries, mostly assessments and then working out what the best intervention route would be. We go to the multi-disciplinary team meetings to hear about the injured jockeys the team is working with and offer some psychological input and keep an ear open for any cases that might involve a mental wellbeing issue."

"It sounds casual but it's also really important to be hanging around where the jockeys actually are in the centre, to have a presence so that when and if someone develops an issue or feels they want to talk to someone, we're not complete strangers."

Duncan had no great familiarity with horse racing before he started working with us. Has he had any surprises about our world and our people?

"The mental health difficulties in racing are the same as anywhere. They might have different causes and we know there are particular pressures in racing that don't occur in other elite sports, the travel and the loneliness of it. But I'm not being surprised by the sorts of issues we see."

"I have been surprised by the openness of people to come forward and talk about their mental health difficulties. I was kind of expecting to be sitting in a room, waiting, until people began to hear about us and trust us. But it's absolutely not been that, and I think that is down to strong trust the racing community has in the IJF as an organisation."

"We've been doing some work with the licensing programme at the British Racing School, promoting mental wellbeing to the new jockeys. I've been really pleasantly surprised by their openness and acceptance that mental wellbeing is as much a part of being an elite athlete as the physical side. It was heartwarming to see the new cohort at the very start of their career showing a shift towards being more open to the mental wellbeing side."

"There has seemed to be a particular stigma in elite sport around mental health and I was expecting it to be even stronger in racing,

from what I'd heard before I became involved, but that's not been my experience. There is stigma and there is still prejudice around and I think that silences people and stops people coming forward when they're struggling and more importantly it stops them coming forward early. Like any difficulty, it's easier to help when it's starting, it's easier to stop it from developing than to intervene once it's taken hold."

**"I have been surprised by the openness of people to come forward and talk about their mental health difficulties."**

Duncan's ambitions, and those of the IJF, go a long way past treating the cases he comes across, important as they are.

"The philosophy of Changing Minds is very much about, how can we work with the whole industry to improve mental wellbeing across the board? We're interested in what's behind the mental health difficulties, within a sporting context, and thinking about what are the themes that come out which the industry as a whole might be able to work on."

"What we don't want to do is to patch people up and put them back into the environment that played a major part in the issue developing. If we can work at both levels, we're getting somewhere."

Asked about his experience of the IJF, Duncan is encouraging. "Of all the organisations I've worked with in my capacity as a clinical psychologist, the IJF has been the most open to acknowledging the need, the most open to working really closely in partnership with us and been incredibly supportive in terms of what we're doing and also thinking about working in partnership with the rest of the industry to make change."

"Often the first year is the most difficult but if future years can be as good as this one, then I'm looking forward to a long and sustained and very beneficial partnership for the jockeys and beneficiaries that we're working with."

***This initiative is funded by the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust***





PJA

Performance Nutritionist

# Ollie Whiteman



**Ollie has been working with the IJF for just over a year and is available to meet jockeys at Peter O'Sullivan House every Thursday morning for confidential one-to-one consultations. It was clear to him from an early stage that there was plenty of scope to make an impact.**

"It's quite astounding, the knowledge levels among jockeys are generally poor and there are some quite old nutrition beliefs that I suppose get passed down. What you hear in the weighing room is not always great practice.

"Jockeys might be looking to lose 6lb in two or three days, so they'll avoid eating or drinking anything. Ultimately, it's not realistic for them to not drink anything for that time and then sit in a sauna trying to get rid of a litre. They don't have a very good understanding of what weight is and how to manage their weight for the long term, which should be through fat loss rather than bouncing up and down with their hydration status.

"I have a lot of empathy for them because managing their weight is a really tricky thing and they're always worrying about food but if they do get it right, they can find a nice balance. It's just finding what works for them, which takes a long time."

Ollie worries that experienced jockeys who come to him are sometimes looking for a 'golden bullet' that will improve their situation quickly. He works hard to inculcate good eating habits in apprentice jockeys, based next door to Peter O'Sullivan at the British Racing School. "Don't be scared of protein," is advice he finds himself giving out repeatedly. "Protein intake is really important, particularly if

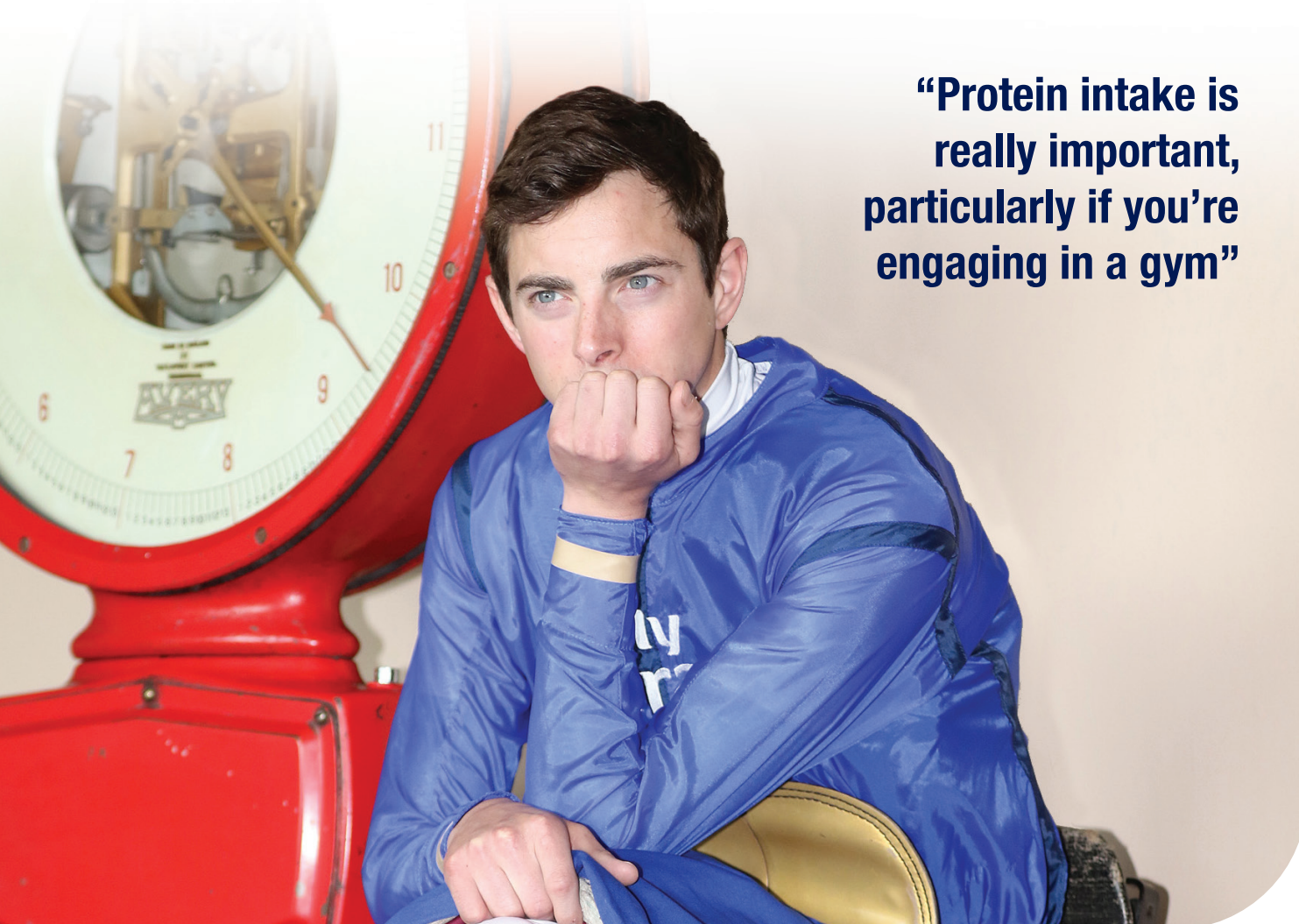
you're engaging in a gym, strength or fitness-based programme, when they'll need protein throughout the day to stimulate muscle growth, repair and recovery.

"Generally, jockeys might have one big meal a day or two, whereas we recommend little and often, spreading it out, making sure they're having a decent breakfast. It might be difficult if they're riding out and I quite often recommend taking things with them to the yard, smoothies or having a good selection of high-protein yoghurts available in the fridges. Just generally, eating as much fruit and veg as possible.

"It takes time. I'm sure the successes will build. We've changed the food options at racecourses to make sure they've always got a really good selection of protein-based foods. We're doing our best and it takes a long time to shift a whole culture, especially when everyone's spread out across the country. The quicker they can realise they're elite athletes and should be eating like elite athletes, then that's a huge win for us."

When Ollie sits down with a jockey, he discusses what they've been eating, suggests recipe ideas and meal plans. "We also do body composition testing, so we look at how much fat they're carrying. For anyone who's looking to drop body weight in a healthy way by losing fat, we can monitor that and make sure it's working. If we get any dangerously low-fat jockeys, who might be tall and pushing themselves, we can give them a bit of an education as to what their minimum riding weight should roughly be."

**"Protein intake is really important, particularly if you're engaging in a gym"**







# Clare Hill

Head of Welfare  
at Oaksey House

**As an insight into the enormous scope of her role as part of our welfare team, Clare begins: “The IJF look after everybody who has a jockey’s licence or has had one in the past. The welfare team look after them pastorally. We are usually their first point of contact.**

“I’ve probably got 135 active beneficiaries on my books. You’re never finished and you never really stop.”

Clare works as one of our three Centre liaisons, providing a link between Oaksey House and those who may want to use it. Sally Lyons has the same role at Jack Berry House, while Nick Gordon is Centre Liaison at Peter O’Sullivan House. Supporting them, we also have three regional liaisons, Karen Sharpe in the north, Julia Mangan in the south and Lucy Charnock in the east.

For many of those we care for, Clare and her colleagues are the face of the IJF. They are our front line, hurrying to help when things are starting to go wrong and often liaising with family members when a jockey is on their way to hospital.

“We all have a budget, so we can help instantly if they haven’t got food in the cupboard or there’s no electricity and they’re in a state. We can help up to a certain amount per beneficiary and that’s one of the things we pride ourselves on, that we can act straight away, up to a point.

“Sometimes, we might go and see somebody who is just desperate for someone to talk to, their mental health is poor. We’ve got clinical psychologists that we’re affiliated with and we can refer to them. They can speak to someone within 48 hours or even faster if there’s a serious problem.

“We are now revitalising our Visitors’ Scheme. I might identify someone’s core problem as being lonely. We have had some fantastic visitors, people giving up their time voluntarily to go and see beneficiaries, take them out, take them racing, chatting and having a cup of tea. I think that was John Oaksey’s vision, that once you were a jockey, you would always be part of that family.

**“We have had some fantastic visitors, people giving up their time voluntarily to go and see beneficiaries...”**

“You’ve got to like people to do this and I think you have to be a caring person. I was a counsellor for a long time. I think we all have a love of racing and an understanding of people who are in that world, how the sport works. I still meet people now who are in their 80s and they still only eat one meal a day because that’s what they’ve always done, even if they haven’t ridden for 40 years. They love being together and meeting up. Racing is a small world.

“To be able to work for an organisation that looks after their sportspeople the way the Injured Jockeys Fund looks after theirs, it’s a real privilege. And of course without our supporters, we couldn’t do any of it.”

## Rehabilitation therapy

at Oaksey House

**In a corridor at Oaksey House, we catch Rob and Gavin as they hasten from one appointment to another. Rob, a 10-year veteran at our Lambourn centre, is a sports therapist and fitness coach. Gavin works as a rehabilitation therapist and strength & conditioning coach.**

While their titles are impressive, they readily acknowledge doing similar work. “We’re the gym rehabilitation role,” says Rob, who describes how the team plan “a rehabilitation pathway” for anyone who arrives needing physiotherapy. “They’d have gym, soft tissue, hands-on physiotherapy, basically getting them back from being broken to being fully fit and raring to get back on a racecourse.

“This place has changed massively in my time, for the better. The jockeys are a lot more engaged now. We’ve done a lot of hard work to get people in here, not just when they’re injured. We try and keep them coming in when they’re fit and looking for conditioning sessions. They put the work in and reap the rewards.”

Televisions all around Oaksey House show live coverage of horse racing. Mostly, it’s in the background but occasionally the team congregates around. Rob recalls that happening when Marc Goldstein made his return to action after five months out with a broken pelvis, an injury that needed extensive rehabilitation.

As Gavin points out, they routinely treat a wide variety of injury types. “We’re not only here to work with people who have broken a bone and we’re going to get them back to performance. More often than not, the impact we’re going to make is just maintaining or improving quality of life.

“We see people with life-changing spinal injuries, people with progressive pathologies where their outcomes are going to get worse over time, so we support them in maintaining the highest quality of life possible - it might be motor neurone disease, Parkinson’s, a stroke or a head injury.

**“More often than not, the impact we’re going to make is just maintaining or improving quality of life”**

“Within an hour, we might move from someone trying to improve their function such as being able to grab something, to trying to push someone who wants to win championships.”

A key part of their learning, Gavin says, is to treat the person, not the injury. “You need to have an understanding of what’s going on for them, outside of these buildings. If their mood goes down, their ability to perform exercise will go down. If they’re stressed, their ability to build muscle will go down, their drive to come in here and do exercise will go down. We’re having to think about that all the time.”

# Jacob Pritchard-Webb

**For those who suffer the most serious injuries, having access to the IJF's rehabilitation facilities can make all the difference as they strive to recover movement and function. Jacob Pritchard-Webb has been staying for extended periods at our Lambourn base, having suffered life-changing injuries in a fall at Auteuil last summer.**

Aged 23 at the time and just beginning to establish himself as a professional jockey in France, Jacob was fired head-first into the ground when his mount misjudged an early obstacle. The fall dislocated his neck and broke two vertebrae, leaving his lower body paralysed.

But he explains, during a stand-up session at Oaksey House, that there is every reason to work for the best recovery possible. "We work on staying strong in your upper body. I'm eight months now post-operation and we feel like there might be some stomach muscles coming back. So we're working on core exercises to build those up and that can help with posture."

Jacob's condition is described as incomplete paraplegia. "So there's a possibility that I'll regain strength and movement. Who knows how much? We can hope for a full recovery but at the moment we've got some stomach muscles firing, so that's our immediate goal, to really try and strengthen them up. That's the focus this week.

"There's always hope. They say after 18 months, what you've got is normally what you've got. So I've got another 10 months to go."

As we talk, Jacob is upright in a standing frame, which supports him with straps. "It's a nice feeling, just to be up here, at eye height. But this has loads of benefits for me. It's good for blood pressure and bone density. There's weight now going through my legs into my feet. It

stretches your hips and helps with leg spasms, bowels as well. If I could, I'd do it every day."

But, with no standing frame at his home, Jacob makes the best use he can of the one at Oaksey House. By this stage of his recovery, he can stand for an hour, sip a cup of tea and watch racing on TV. But he recalls a distressing scene when he first tried it a month after his injury: "Twenty seconds and I was going to black out, just from going from lying down to upright. I couldn't even do 30 seconds without telling them to set me back down again, crash team in, blood pressure on."

Jacob is also making use of the IJF's hydropool and benefiting from physiotherapy sessions. At some stage, he hopes to try out exoskeleton equipment provided by the Hobbs neurological rehabilitation team which works at Oaksey House and elsewhere. In the long term, he hopes to work as a bloodstock agent and has already received an offer from Highflyer to shadow their team at upcoming sales.

He has had morale-boosting visits from various members of the IJF family, including John Francome, Sir Anthony McCoy and George Baker. "AP was a big shock, he just rocked up out of the blue one day. It shows they care.

"The IJF has been a massive support. The fact that they've got Hobbs here means they can help me improve massively. If it wasn't for a place like this, my rehabilitation would have stopped. I would have had to go about it all by myself. But because of the support from the IJF, I can continue.

"This stomach-muscle strength, I only regained it a week or two ago. If it wasn't for the IJF, I wouldn't be here with these guys, learning about how to capitalise on it."

**Jacob is also making use of the IJF's hydropool and benefiting from physiotherapy sessions**





# Jerry McGrath

The IJF's Lambourn centre includes several living units where jockeys can stay during extended periods of rehabilitation, but Jerry McGrath never expected to find himself in one of them. The 30-year-old has a home, after all, barely a mile away on the other side of the village but a shocking pile-up at Lingfield in January left him unable to climb stairs for a couple of months, so living at home was not immediately practical.

The veteran jump jockey smiles as he recalls his approach to that day's work, when he had six rides in jumpers' bumpers. "There's no such thing as easy money but I'm going there with two or three favourites for Nicky Henderson and you're looking forward to them. No obstacles, you'd think it would be fairly straightforward.

"Turning for home in the last race of the day, it got a bit tight, there was a few big-priced horses in front coming back at us, everyone's looking for racing room and unfortunately it ran out. I was on a small filly who just clipped a heel and went down."

Fortunately, Vegas Blue was no more than shaken by the experience and was competing again by March. Jerry was not so lucky.

"When you clip heels like that, it's so quick. There's a neck and a set of ears in front of you and then all of a sudden there's nothing there and you're going down..."

"I stayed conscious for all of it and initially I was thinking, I'd prefer if I was knocked out. I fractured and dislocated my hip and shoulder on my left side. They had to be pinned and plated.

"The pain was horrendous, the worst I've ever felt in my life. And there was a horse on top of me at first. For maybe 90 seconds, I had no

feeling in my legs at all. At that point, I thought, anything's a bonus, if this comes back.

"It did come back eventually. Not that I was relieved because I was still in a world of pain but at least they moved my toes and stuff."

After weeks in hospital, isolated by the fact that visitors are not allowed under anti-Covid rules, Jerry was frankly relieved to move in at Oaksey. "There's a good welcoming feeling about the place, everyone's asking after you."

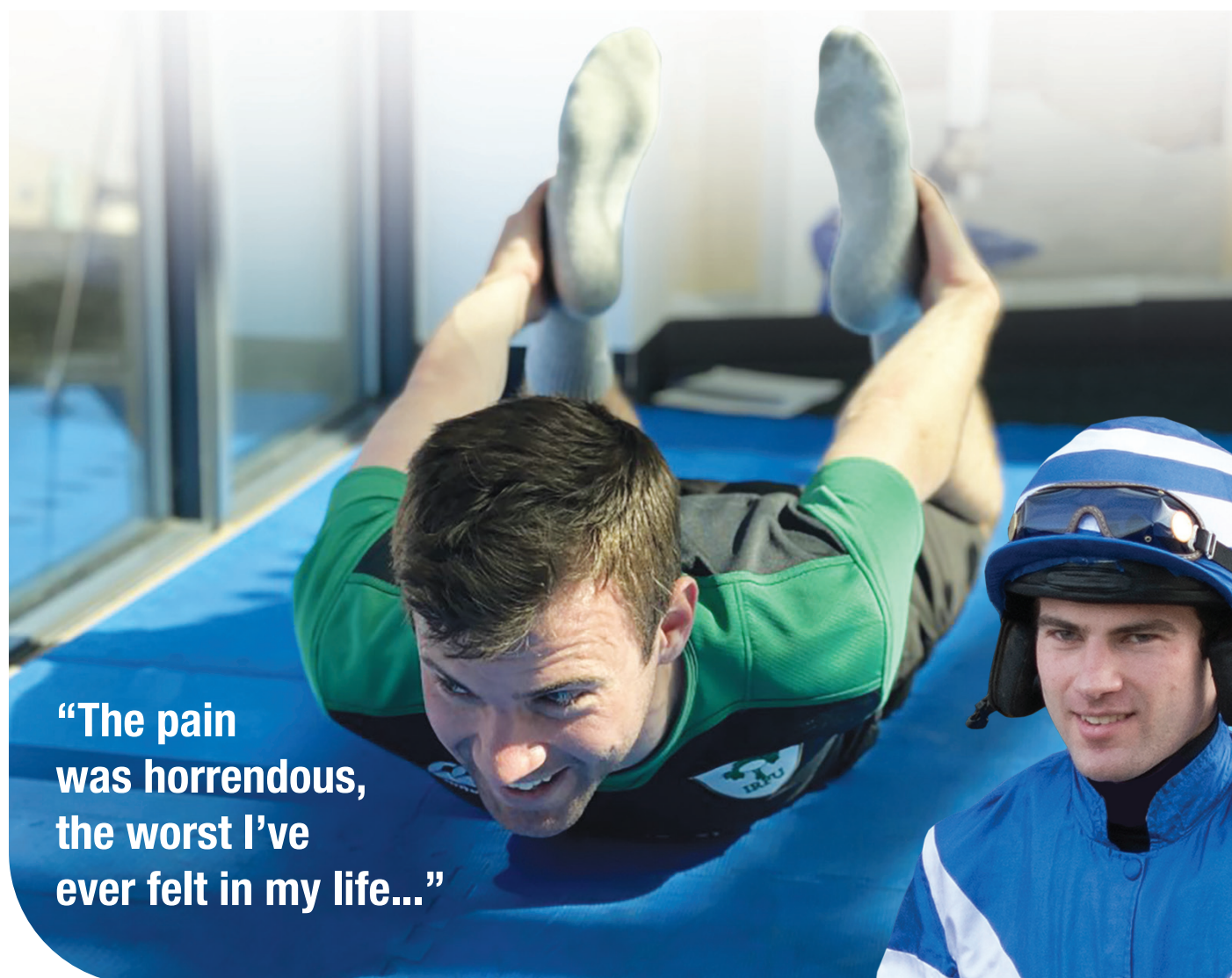
He has been working hard in the hydro pool, maintaining his fitness in the gym and benefiting from an electrical nerve stimulator. "I was saying to one of the physiotherapists, if I was just a guy doing a nine to five job and had this injury, what would the timescale be for recovery? And he said anywhere from 18 months to two years.

"You'd be getting physiotherapy once a month, you wouldn't be doing much in between, you'd be sitting around feeling sorry for yourself, whereas here everything is done straight away and it's brilliant.

"When you've been here before and you know everyone, they get to know you. They're shrewd at knowing how you're feeling that day. The other day, I was really down. You think things are going the right way and then you hear some bad news.

"But they pick up on it right away and they handle it very well. It's all well and good trying to fix your body but you have to fix your head as well."

Soon, Jerry will be able to return to living at home, but his rehabilitation at Oaksey House will continue day to day. His hip is recovering well but his shoulder will evidently need a bit more time.



**"The pain was horrendous, the worst I've ever felt in my life..."**



# Paul Mulrennan

**As part of its mission to promote jockey health, the IJF is here to help riders who might be passed fit to ride but know they are not quite at their peak. Paul Mulrennan found himself in that situation early this year, suffering continuous pain after a problem that many of us will be familiar with: a horse trod on his foot.**

"You know what it's like, we're racing in light boots, you don't have a lot of protection. I gave it a few days' rest and went back riding and of course the worst thing happened, I rode a double the first day back.

"So I just thought, let's just get on with it. The physiotherapist were strapping it and I was getting through it okay with a few painkillers. But it just wasn't getting any better and I was thinking, the Flat season's round the corner, I need to get this sorted."

A scan revealed that a bone in Paul's foot was broken. "I'd been weight-bearing on it every day, which is why it wasn't healing."

Paul came to Jack Berry House, where staff were able to stabilise the injury with a fitted boot so that he could maintain his fitness without aggravating it. "I trained every day to keep my fitness up. They had me running up the hill in the pool. It's an unbelievable place, I don't know how we managed for so long without it.

"They have everything there. I've not been to Manchester Utd or Manchester City but from what I can gather, it's similarly well equipped. They've got all the gadgets and their strength and conditioning coaches can put you through the mill. They know what you can and can't do."

Paul returned to action on the first weekend of flat racing on turf at Doncaster and found his foot to be 'good as gold'.





# Eoin Walsh

**Eoin Walsh made headlines when it emerged he had lost half a centimetre in height as the result of being fired head-first into the Chelmsford sand in November, with The Sun declaiming in their headline about a jockey who had been “shrunk”. The 26-year-old was having his first ride in the Godolphin colours when Nation’s Beauty tragically broke both front legs in the home straight.**

“It was a disaster for everybody, the groom, the owner,” Eoin reflects. “They were looking forward to seeing her run and were quite upset by the whole scenario.

“I hit the ground quite hard, head first. There’s no give in that surface, you just stop dead on it, not like the grass, where you can roll with it.

“I was knocked out for a couple of minutes and remember waking up with everyone around me. I was unsure if I’d only broken ribs or my back. I got a good kicking in my arm as well. Three vertebrae was what I did in the end.”

Eoin is not perturbed by his fractional loss of height, having discussed it with the sport’s chief medical advisor, Dr Jerry Hill. “He explained to me that it’s like a Crunchie bar, your vertebrae. The chocolate is fine

but the honeycomb inside has been crushed. I couldn’t imagine it being described any other way now.”

One week after his fall, Eoin began his rehabilitation at the IJF’s Peter O’Sullivan House, majoring at first in the underwater treadmill. “It takes a lot of the impact away. For the first couple of weeks, I was walking on that and keeping my muscles going.

“From the week after Christmas, I upped the ante. I was running in the pool at a good pace and regularly in the gym, doing a lot of circuits, covering every muscle in my body. Torturing me, basically.” By mid-March, Eoin was back race-riding.

“The IJF staff were fantastic. When I went back riding out, my fitness levels were brilliant. I would say I’d be quite fit normally, but I’ve never been as fit in my life as I was after all those sessions at Peter O’Sullivan House.

“I’d like to say a massive thanks to the staff, I couldn’t thank them enough. There’s no words to describe how brilliant they have been. They’re great people. They’re more like friends, so I enjoy going in to speak to them, rather than thinking ‘Oh God, I have to go to the gym’. You look forward to catching up with them.”

**“I hit the ground quite hard, head first. There’s no give in that surface, you just stop dead on it...”**





# INJURED JOCKEYS FUND GRAND (NATIONAL) WEEKEND

Our powers of invention have been tested as never before over the last year and this spring found our staff thinking up ways to involve and energise Injured Jockeys Fund supporters while we all continued to live under Covid-related restrictions. The answer was 'IJF Grand National weekend', when we decided to have a bit of fun around the world's most famous race.

There were lots of ways to participate. Some people walked, ran or cycled the Grand National distance to raise funds, while others had a cake-bake party. We sold lots of fun IJF Grand National packs, including balloons, bunting, recipe cards and a free bet with Paddy Power, who sponsored the whole idea and covered our costs.

Lisa Hancock, our Chief Executive, said: "The IJF is steeped in Grand National history and we thought the idea of an activity pack would encourage people at home to have some fun and support us along the way. Why not encourage the kids to jump 40 poles or make a 'Red Rum' tea loaf?"

That last idea proved a runaway success worthy of the horse it was named after and we were delighted to hear from so many of you who enjoyed it. Among them was Gillian Dunwoody, mother of Richard, who won a couple of Nationals himself and now runs our website.

Evidently, Mrs D is not a habitual baker but she was determined to support our cause and put together a couple of Rummy cakes, with the emphasis on the rum. But when she switched on her oven, having not done so for quite some time before, she found it wasn't working.

Pausing only to order a new oven, and showing the resourcefulness which won her son championships, Gillian piled into her car with her Rummy cakes and drove to a friend's house in the next village, where the baking was duly completed.

Only when the installation experts arrived with a new oven some days later was the source of the problem discovered: a stack of baking tins in a cupboard had knocked the power switch to 'off'. Which all goes to show what a lot some of our supporters will put themselves through to make things better for injured jockeys!



## Congratulations to this year's Grand National winning jockey Rachael Blackmore



Rachael delivered such an historic win and produced the perfect ride on Minella Times for owner J.P. McManus, and trained by Henry de Bromhead. A brilliant result for a brilliant jockey! Well done to all connections.

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