

## National Jumps Day

Brings down the curtain  
on the 2010 Jumping Season



Fair King - Winner on National Jumps Day

For most people I believe it would be fair to acknowledge the 2010 Jumping Season contained numerous moments of frustration. Overall, I would be the first to admit, due to matters governed by the gods, the five month season was never given an opportunity to be classified as a vintage one.

Sure there have been some outstanding moments - Hynotize's success in the Great Northern Steeplechase was one to rival the greatest in the history of steeplechasing in New Zealand. It was truly a thorough pleasure to

witness it. The brave wins of Counter Punch at Riccarton also advertised how special jump racing can be. I am sure, that for most readers there would be a personal moment of elation at some stage that would have made you think the hard effort has been worth it. I hope so.

The wet and windy conditions at Trentham on National Jumps Day reflected what we seem to have endured, all season long, particularly for those domiciled in the Central Districts. I doubt that fewer races have ever been run in the CD in a season, since jumping began. The perpetual dismal weather played havoc with everyone's well laid plans and meetings were lost with alarming regularity, costing industry stakeholders dearly.

However, National Jumps Day despite what was thrown at us from the heavens was a success for the club and a great advert for jump racing. The fields were small but the venue remains a pleasure to watch racing from and the sport was unquestionably thrilling and competitive.

NZ Jumps Inc is well aware of the debate that abounds over the positioning of National Jumps Day. Nobody goes forward standing still and things have to be tried and I think it would be fair to conclude that the meeting was a success in Wellington. Others may disagree and debate is a healthy thing.

The oversight made in the programme advertised in the TRM, regarding the omission of the novice events and the incorrect inclusion of the restricted open events was regretful, and those who were affected by the late change had solid grounds for complaint. It would also have been preferable if the deal that NZ Jumps Inc struck with Majestic Horse Transport had been announced earlier as well. I promise you, those who have mentioned these concerns - your words have not fallen on deaf ears.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to John Kenny and his team at Majestic Horse Floats for agreeing to be involved with National Jumps Day. I know that for sure, the South Island team that headed North were incredibly pleased with the offer that was put to them and without it, they may not have contemplated the costly journey to participate and the day would have been worse off without their involvement.

The future location of National Jumps Day will always be discussed and I for one see no reason why it should not return to the Central Districts sometime in the future. However, next year we are very excited at the likelihood of staging National Jumps Day at Ellerslie on October 16. No doubt the Auckland Racing Club will utilize the event to good effect and work hard to attract the English and Irish racing fans in New Zealand over here to watch the Rugby World Cup. I am already looking forward to it and already have my fingers crossed for the weather!

### Your Words of Wisdom are Welcome

NZ Jumps Inc is hoping to host a series of regional meetings to gain industry feedback in the New Year. However, please do not wait until then if you have ideas, suggestions, comments or indeed any form of feedback relating to jump racing. Don't dwell on your thoughts, please call or email, Andre Klein on 027 2423767 / ceo@gallopsouth.co.nz.

### Waikato Steeplechase Distance Change

The reduction in the distance of the McGregor Grant Steeplechase to 4150m had a positive impact on its starter numbers this year and was a change that was welcomed by the jumping fraternity.

Given the early season positioning of the Braxton Waikato Steeplechase and the anticipated later start to the jumping year in 2011, the Waikato Racing Club in conjunction with NZ Jumps Inc have agreed to reduce the distance of the prestige event to 4000m from its traditional length of 4900m.

### Rating Races & Jumpers

NZTR are looking at changing the rules regarding Rating 70/80/90s and Jumpers events. The objective is for horses holding jumping tickets to gain priority entry into the field. Gaining a start has not always been an easy task given the number of horses nominating for these events, especially in the 70 rated races.

### The One Win Dilemma?

NZ Jumps Inc has received a handful of requests to programme more events for one win horses and is considering best how to include opportunities for them in the schedule.

It remains absolutely imperative that jump racing fields are maintained at the optimum level. The dilemma for those charged with putting the programmes together is the concern that if we stage too many one win races we could end up losing too many horses out of the open/restricted open grade and jeopardize their viability.



Richard Eynon - NZ's Leading Jumps Rider in 2010

## Linda Jenkins Champion Amateur Again!

The result of NZ Amateur Rider Series 2010 came down to the result of the last race. Linda Jenkins defended her title with a compelling victory onboard Whisper To Me at Trentham. This victory leap-frogged her over Scott Wenn, who led the Series going into the event. Scott sadly did not secure a ride in the final leg and was relying on Linda failing to perform in order to claim the trophy. Disappointingly for Scott, it was not to be, as Linda rode a terrific race.

Amateur races remain a well discussed topic. Some people love them and some people are incredibly critical of their inclusion on TAB programmes. I am a firm believer that they are vitally important for racing in New Zealand. For one, they break up the monotony of everyday racing and provide a highly entertaining point of difference, and a hook to attract interest in our sport.....which needs every baited hook it can get! I think we under sell amateur racing, because we are too concerned about what "punters" think about the quality of them as a betting medium. Surely, our sport is deeper than that? Amateur racing is a fantastic way to encourage participation. It provides those who can never become a bone fide jockey with a realistic avenue to realize a dream of riding in a race. Also, as it has for many a year, amateur racing provides a great pathway for those who will come through its ranks to become professionals.

With all that said though, some new parameters need to be set to ensure the safety of riders engaged in amateur races. Right now it is generally thought that the regulations placed around applying for a license are too



Whisper To Me and Linda Jenkins (Left)



Linda & Duke of Gloucester Cup

light. Some form of qualification is required to guarantee that riders have the necessary skill in order to reduce the risk of injury to themselves or those around them. No one is expecting that they all ride like Opie Bosson or Jonathon Riddell but they must be satisfactorily competent.

NZTR are currently reviewing the minimum requirements surrounding amateur license applications. The new guidelines should be adopted in time for the 2011 Amateur Rider Series.

Jumping/Amateur/Highweight/Jumpers Flat/Long Distance  
Draft Programmes for the 2011 Season  
are already available on  
[www.nzracing.co.nz](http://www.nzracing.co.nz)



## Worthy of an Award

Auckland Racing Club's Neli Laufoli



Jumps racing in this country depends on a myriad of participants to enable it to prosper. One such individual worthy of special mention is Neli Laufoli, a member of the Auckland Racing Club's track management team. It's essentially due to his diligence and enthusiasm that the Ellerslie steeplechase fences were presented in such superb order for the Pakuranga Hunt and Great Northern race meetings in August and September.

In the lead-up to the two major spring dates, course manager Jason Fulford assigned Neli the task of trimming and leveling the jumps on the famous steeplechase course. What he came up with met the approval of not only his employers but also those involved directly with the competing horses.

"Neli's a city boy and has been employed by the club for 12 months," says Jason. "I gave him his instructions and he went to work, coming back to me fence by fence to make sure he was getting it right. "The feedback from the jockeys and everyone else tells its own story and is a credit to Neli's dedication."

For his efforts Neli was named the Auckland Racing Club's employee of the month and his name will go forward as a candidate in deciding the first winner of the recently initiated ARC employee of the year award. NZ Jumps Inc

The Champion Hypnotize addresses a well maintained fence at Ellerslie



Foremost takes the last at Trentham in his stride

## First & Foremost

The Grace Family Jumping Success Continues

Foremost has big shoes to fill if he's to live up to the tradition of jumpers racing in the Grace family colours, but he's certainly begun the right way.

The Mark Oulaghan-trained six-year-old confirmed his potential with an impressive win in the El Cheapo Cars Jumps Series Final on National Jumps Day at Trentham in late September. That was just his third start over hurdles and his second win, setting him up for a campaign aimed at feature races in the 2011 jumps season.

What transpires then will decide whether Foremost has any chance of being spoken of in the same breath as one of the all-time greats of New Zealand jumps racing, Clarion Call, or another notable from last century, Hi There.

The trio's common denominator is their being owned by members of the Grace family from Hunterville. Dual Grand National Steeplechase winner Clarion Call was raced by George Grace, Hi There by his wife Jeannie, and now Foremost by their son Christopher and his wife Susanna.

"Clarion Call was before my time but I've certainly heard a lot of stories about him," says Christopher. "He must have been some horse to carry 12 stone something in his second Grand National."

Clarion Call won the Homeby-Grand National double in 1938 and returned to Riccarton to add the 1940 Grand National. He was also very capable over the smaller fences, with one of his wins in that role at Ellerslie on New Year's Day when he carried more than 13 stone, as well as taking the Wanganui Hurdles leading up to one of his three Wanganui Steeplechase victories.

Hi There raced in the 1960s, when his successes included the Wellington, Pakuranga and Wanganui Steeplechases. His first win had been as a late two-year-old, at gargantuan odds just short of 200 pounds!

Christopher Grace raced his first horse at the age of 21 and likewise entered racing administration at an early age, becoming the youngest ever president of the Marton Jockey Club when just 28.

It was only out of loyalty to the northern Manawatu club that he purchased a donated service to Rossini which he then matched with his broodmare Karaka to produce a bay colt in the spring of 2004.

"I didn't particularly like the stallion and I definitely didn't like the look of the foal I got," Christopher admits frankly. "That didn't change as he started to grow so I gave him away to the local huntsman.

"A couple of years later I happened to spot him in the paddock and even though he still wasn't that good looking, he had at least developed into a reasonable type.

"I asked the chap if I could buy him back and for how much. He replied that he could be mine again for \$500, so I gave him \$650!"

The upshot of what could only be described as an unusual sequence of events is that Christopher and Susanna Grace now have a horse that has earned his place alongside so many others that have raced in the Irish tricolour emerald green, gold and white family colours.

### Mares Allowances

There has been a marked increase in the number of mares participating in jumping this season. NZTR are in the process of contemplating the introduction of a mares allowance to further encourage their involvement in time for the 2011/12 season jumping season.

NZ Jumps Inc are planning to trial a Mares only hurdle at Rotorua Bay of Plenty Hunt Clubs 2011 meeting. Watch this space!

### Two New Jumping Venues for 2011

Two new jumping venues, (well not exactly new - just re-instated), have been added to the official jump racing tracks list for 2011/12 jumping season. The Wingatui jumps circuit has been re-vamped extensively and will aim to host three fixtures, the first of which will be on June 12.

Hawera will be added to the Central Districts roster relieving pressure, in particular on Foxton, who endured a torrid time in August with what the skies threw at them.

## More Mares the Merrier!



In these days of identifying and promoting racing opportunities for fillies and mares, it's timely to recognise the role that members of the supposedly fairer sex can play in jumps racing.

That's especially relevant at the end of a year where mares, headed by HANZ Grand National Hurdles winner Joint Effort, have proven unequivocally that they have a place in the rough and tumble of our favourite racing pursuit.

Not that there's anything new in that. Back in the years of the Great Depression, Aurora Borealis set the standard for her sex over jumps. The pint-sized mare, who won the 1930 Great Northern and Grand National Steeplechases - the second of those under 11st 11lb (75kgs) - is still regarded as New Zealand's best ever female jumper.

This writer's memory can go back to the 1960s and bonny jumping mares such as Prettypreen, Quenby Hall and Falada. Gordon Campbell's Prettypreen was one of the best jumpers around in the first half of the 1960s, when she mixed hurdling and steeplechasing to excellent effect. In the 1964-65 season she won nine times across both disciplines, but is perhaps best remembered for her half-length second to Smoke Ring, the champion jumper of that era, in the Great Northern Hurdles. As a mark of her versatility, the following weekend she came out and won the McGregor Grant Steeplechase. In the process she beat Ringlock and Sabre, the pair that had finished in the same positions behind Smoke Ring when he completed the Great Northern double five days earlier.



Joint Effort - A quality Southland trained mare wins the Grand National Hurdle

Matangi owner-trainer Ivan Robinson's Quenby Hall completed a popular double in the 1964 Clarkin-Waikato Steeplechases, while the standout jumping mare of the late 1960s was another farm-trained south-east of Hamilton City, Jack Ranstead's Falada. As an eight-year-old in the winter of 1969 she won the Great Northern Steeplechase and backed up to come from a seemingly impossible position on top of the final hill and add the McGregor Grant Steeplechase. Falada went on to become a successful producer, her progeny including another very capable female jumper in Aurlada. She was to win only a single race, but is still spoken of as one of the unluckiest placegetters in Great Northern Steeplechase history. In the 1981 contest her rider Chris Wood broke a stirrup when his mount was squeezed against the running rail in the tight approach to the fence near the 1600-metre start point.

That meant Wood had to ride the last round of the gruelling race with no irons, yet Aurlada still managed to finish third just a short-head and half a length from the winner Bean's Beau. Five days later she got her reward when she beat Bean's Beau to score her maiden win in the McGregor Grant Steeplechase.

Various other mares flew the flag for their gender over the three remaining decades of last century, amongst them the Bill Cole-owned and trained Lady Edwina, who in the early 1980s downed the mighty Hunterville in the McGregor Grant Steeplechase, and Sheryl McGlade's 1996 Grand National winner Just Jojo. She has revived memories of that win lately as the dam of developing steeplechaser Karlos, the runner-up to Hypnotize in last month's Great Northern.

If further proof was needed that mares deserve a place in jumps racing, it was there for all to see in the 2010 jumping season. Of the 253 individual hurdle and steeplechase starters from April to September, 19 (7.5%) were mares. Seven of that number between them won 11 of the 122 races contested, which converts to a commendable success rate of just over 9%. The list of winning mares is headed by Grand National Hurdle winner Joint Effort, whose four wins also included the Sydenham on the first day of the Riccarton carnival, while she also finished fourth in the Great Northern Hurdle. Southern Countess, who races in the same colours as a good jumping mare of the 1980s in Marji's Gold, finished one place ahead of Joint Effort in the Ellerslie feature and in her previous start had won in open company on the same track. The first mare to win over jumps this year was Sahara Sunset at Paeroa in late May, while others not already mentioned were Fixintofly (Te Aroha June 25), Politic (Paeroa July 28), Honey and Sahara Sunset (Rotorua September 15) and Kaurnivia (National Jumps Day, Trentham September 26). Another worthy of special mention is 2009 Grand National Steeplechase placegetter Nana, who went winless all year but added further placings in the Great Western, Waikato and Manawatu Steeplechases.