**Report - Kingston Blount Racing Club (KBRC) Point-to-Point @ Kingston Blount**

**Saturday 4th March 2017**

**By Andrew Norman**

Craig Pilgrim’s **Peeping Thom** resumed his progression under Page Fuller by mastering hot favourite Pride of Parish in a competitive Connolly’s Red Mills Intermediate at Kingston Blount on Saturday.

The race, landed by series winners Sharp Suit and Harbour Court in recent years, is often won by an above average candidate for Cheltenham and Pilgrim hopes his charge is met with suitable ground for the Final on May 5th.

“We’d love to go to Cheltenham and if it came up soft that would be perfect,” said Pilgrim. “The ground suited us today. He’s got loads of stamina and while he’s not slow, I’d always feel he could be vulnerable to something with more toe.”

The eight-year-old son of Tamure, three from four under Fuller, looked a horse on the up when prevailing in a strong Restricted at Larkhill last year but two subsequent disappointments followed. “He was suffering from respiratory problems but we hope he’s over them now,” explained the Longcot-based handler. “He wouldn’t be a horse that takes a lot of racing and I’ll be keen to see him sound in the morning.”

Beedon trainer Tim Underwood saddled a double for rider Phil York as course specialist **Tempelpirate** and improving mare **Cheltenham Mati** landed the Conditions and Restricted races respectively.

Tempelpirate, bouncing back from a rare defeat six days previously, has now won a remarkable 15 races from 18 starts since joining Underwood and is unbeaten in seven visits to Kingston Blount. The German-bred gelding coasted home unchallenged with the task made considerably easier when main market rival It Was Me unseating Archie Wright after a circuit.

Despite only two of the eleven-strong field completing the course, five-year-old Cheltenham Mati was made to work hard by I Believe in the Restricted, the dashing grey mare toughing it out best in the rain-softened conditions.

“She’s a nice young horse and has a bit of class,” said Underwood. “I think I was lucky that she didn’t win a race in Ireland. I’ve only had her eight weeks and she’ll improve on better ground. She’ll have a little break now.”

“Tempelpirate is a lovely horse. He’s so laidback. He loves it round here and there’s a similar race for him later in the season. He would do more in a piece of work at home so he’ll run again soon.”

A final fence blunder was not enough to stop the Gerald Bailey-trained **Seamusjay** scoring in the young horse Maiden under Tom McClorey.

The decision for the Holdenby handler to have a rare runner at the Oxfordshire circuit was instigated by owner John Docker. “We targeted this race because it was confined to four, five and six-year-olds over 2m5f,” said Docker. “We bought him through Katy Price after two runs in Ireland. He’s still a big baby and has a lot of filling out to do. I feel he’ll be a better horse on better ground and would imagine we’ll have one more run before the end of the season but I’ll leave that up to the trainer.”

Docker was soon celebrating a double as the classy **Vedettariat**, of whom he owns a share alongside the Ellis, Andrews and Wales families, appreciated underfoot conditions in the Skinner’s Ladies Open. The eight-year-old, who contested a Grade One at Fairyhouse last season when trained by Willie Mullins, never looked in danger under Gina Andrews.

“He’s won two this season but this is the first time he’s had a bit of cut in the ground and you could see the improvement in his jumping,” said Warwickshire trainer Tom Ellis. “He was beaten by a better horse on the day at Horseheath last month but the ground was too quick for him and we actually dug a corn out of this foot a couple of days later. He’s got a big engine and we could aim higher at something like the Final at Stratford if it came up soft but I’m keen to stick at this job for now and continue to build his confidence.”

**Full Trottle** (Johnny Bailey), an easy winner of the Mens Open, is likely to be making the transition back into hunter chases soon. Laura Thomas’s charge has regained his form this term after a disappointing 2016 campaign, winning three from four.

Thomas said of her eight-year-old gelding: “He had a fantastic first season for us, winning three, including a hunter chase at Fontwell, but didn’t progress last year and pulled up twice. We gave him a wind op and he seems to be back to the horse we know and love. Dad wants to go hunter chasing again now and he’ll be easy to place because he goes on any ground and is versatile in terms of trip.”

Shane Roche guided outsider **Top Man Tim** to a shock victory in the old horse Maiden. Tommie O’Brien attempted to make all on runner-up Born To Succeed, and nearly did just that, but gave best to the fast-finishing ten-year-old on the run-in.

The Flemensfirth gelding was beaten an aggregate of 174 lengths in three low-grade handicap hurdle completions for Martin Cullinane and his performance surprised new trainer Thomas Gallagher. “I’ve had him for about four months and have freshened him up as he completely lost his confidence in Ireland,” said the South Mimms trainer. “We’ve been doing lots of schooling and it’s worked a treat. It’s a surprise he’s won as he’ll certainly come on for the run today.”