

Gitane Du Berlais (12:25 Punchestown)

31st January 2015 - Sandown - With one favourite falling when looking dangerous and another market rival running no race she actually only beat Irish Saint who did not jump, anywhere near, as well as he had done last time out.

Her jumping warmed up after a shaky start and she looked more impressive in the latter stages. She was shortened for the festival after this even though that challenge will have little or nothing to do with what she actually achieved here. She enjoyed an uncontested lead in a race that totally fell apart and, even though this does not mean she could not do the same in a more competitively run chase, it does mean she still has an awful lot to prove in comparison with several horses that will line up against her in March.

Boru's Brook (12:55 Wetherby)

15th April 2015 - Cheltenham - His winning form had come when competing on heavy ground so there had to be some doubt about his ability on this quicker surface. We don't know how he would have fared in the finish but he certainly looked to be in with every chance when his mistake two out resulted in him being pulled up.

Quickasyoucan (13:00 Punchestown)

11th April 2014 - Ayr - He was receiving plenty of weight but still got nailed close home by a well handicapped rival. This form should turn out to be pretty good.

Outlander (13:00 Punchestown)

11th March 2015 - Cheltenham - he is more of a chasing type than one or two in front of him and ran well enough until a serious blunder four out cost him ground and momentum. BC then made his challenge on the wide outside which would have cost him a little more ground. In the right ground and conditions he might well be up there with the winner and the third home if they should renew rivalry at Punchestown. Thereafter, he is the one of those three that is most likely to go novice chasing next season. It is a point to remember that he was disappointing today as he appeared to be one of the two leading contenders for this contest. Windsor Park ran about half a second slower than Zabana (rated 144 carried 9lbs less) over the first couple of hurdles and then maintained that discrepancy to the finishing line. This emphasises the difficulty that the Neptune runners gave themselves in gifting Windsor Park such a relatively easy trip for a Grade One race.

April Dusk (13:05 Uttoxeter)

27th February 2015 - Newbury - He ran well even though he was out of his depth. He paid for trying to stay with the front two with a very soft unseated rider at the last. He can safely be regarded as being miles clear of all bar the front two.

Un Temps Pour Tout (13:15 Cheltenham)

20th August 2015 - There is enough available evidence in his profile to suggest that he is a few pounds below the top staying hurdlers around. This supposition may be somewhat clouded in the betting markets after his all the way win in the lucrative Grade One Auteuil race he won in early June. He has shown his liking for that course prior to racing in Britain and, on balance, I would prefer to rank him on his British form when racing over here, despite the fact that he is now rated 163 due to that French success. The fact that he made all the running at Auteuil may influence his connections thinking this coming season - I would remain open minded as to whether or not this will bring about any improvement. I would have assumed that he would go novice chasing this coming season and this is certainly the route I would prefer for him; however, his trainer might opt for another go at the leading hurdlers after beating Zarkandar and co so easily in June. It would be interesting if the market over reacted to his French success when he returns to race in England this winter.

11th April 2015 - Aintree - It looks fairly safe to assume that, on the balance of his each of his latest three performances, he is a bit behind the best stayers of his generation. That said, he ran another fine race here without, perhaps, quite giving the impression that he truly stayed this trip as well as the front two. He might improve next season over a shorter or easier trip.

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - I am not sure whether I would prefer him on good or soft ground - I will monitor that one for a bit longer. He is likely to continue to look below top class on either. The form of the Cleeve hurdle worked out well here and he, broadly speaking, ran to a similar level with Saphir in both races.

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - If we rely on pounds per lengths then he has it all to do if he is to reverse this form in March. Along with the winner here, I think he is likely to improve on better ground. On the down side, all the messages from the yard suggested that he was 100% ready for today and strongly fancied to win. Obviously, he may improve for having had a competitive race anyway, but the pre-race confidence implies he is unlikely to improve for fitness. Nonetheless, the World Hurdle appears to be wide open and he deserves to take his chance; that said, where else would he go with a 154 rating?

3rd May 2014 - Punchestown - He was prominent all the way but appeared to be dropping away until rallying from the last to nearly snatch second place. He had a lot on his plate here with top weight off a mark of 150 and his new mark of 152 will not help. However, he is a high class handicapper who should be able to run well in

some decent races next season. The better ground here may have brought about some improvement.

15th February 2014 - Ascot - he is thought to be okay but not as good as they had originally hoped. He won on the bridle here but had nothing to beat with the second favourite jumping out to his left after having problems at the start. He may well be over - estimated next time.

18th January 2014 - Haydock - He stayed on strongly against a good class rival on this British debut. The word from the yard was that he was doing everything asked without setting the world on fire. This is how he ran though he may be better over further and/or a sounder surface.

Blaklion (13:15 Cheltenham)

10th October 2015 - Chepstow - He jumped really well on this chasing debut. He was easily the smallest horse in this field which is something that looks likely to hold him back over fences. That said, he should pay his way in small field chases at some of the smaller tracks.

10th April 2015 - Aintree - He ran better than last time here but probably found the ground a little quick for him. Front runners can do well at Haydock in late November in that expensive three mile fixed brush race - that could well be the right level for him off 144 next season. Conversely, he has won well round Cheltenham before so he could easily take in a couple of Pertemps Qualifiers there before going for the final in March.

13th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He had been a strong fancy for this race for most of the season. He was strong in the market and STD gave up the inside to nobody all the way round. I think there was enough evidence on the day to suggest that the inside rail was the last place to be on the hurdle course.

24th January 2015 - Doncaster - He can be marked up as the best horse in the race having been disadvantaged by the slow early pace and then again by duelling all the way up the home straight. One would imagine that he will be ridden more aggressively in the Albert Bartlett which should show him in a better light.

29th December 2014 - Newbury - He didn't hurdle as well as he did last time at Cheltenham. His fractions suggested he was a leading Albert Bartlett hope there and he ran well here over this drop in distance even though he was made to look one paced for the second time by the winner over this this sort of trip. It is possible that this race came too soon being as it is just 16 days since a tough win at Cheltenham. His last time out effort still marks him up as a very serious Albert Bartlett contender and this run will do no harm to his chances or his ante post price.

13th December 2014 - Cheltenham - This was very pleasing to the eye as he powered home off the final bend and up the hill. He looked the winner from a long way out and appears to be a high class novice. The runner up is rated just 121 and two of the next three probably didn't run their races so this looked better compared to how it will read from a ratings point of view. He has won five from six of his races under rules and it would be no surprise if he turned out to be good enough to go close in March. His sectionals were very good. From the 7th last to the last he ran faster than The New One.

14th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He surprisingly set a very slow pace and was easily done for toe after looking the likeliest winner after the last flight. He has run two similar races in a row, he has jumped and travelled well and could act as a good marker in his next couple of races.

25th October 2014 - Chepstow - He was pulled out at the start when supported down to favourite at Cheltenham last week and did it well here at 8/1 after leading from half way. This was a huge step up in his first time hood after his disappointing hurdlers debut at Perth recently. He made this a real test in the soft ground and was probably idling as the runner up closed him down after the last flight. Ashe is trained by NTD he is unlikely to improve for fitness and he was given a hard enough time bearing in mind his inexperience.

Vicente (13:15 Cheltenham)

23rd October 2015 - Cheltenham - He lost ground and momentum at the third and second last flights and showed a good attitude to close down the runner up on the run in. he has not always been a horse to associate with such willingness. If everything falls right he could win a decent contest; however, he appears to be a horse to take a chance on at a bigger price and tend away from when trading very short. The 'Old Flowers' would look an obvious next race after the way he plugged on today.

25th October 2014 - Chepstow - He just didn't jump well enough in the home straight to keep tabs on the leader and, as he loses his novice hurdle tag next week, he is to be sent straight over fences according to PN. He wore the hood again here.

17th October 2014 - Cheltenham - He took quite a pull early doors and probably will be even better off a faster pace. He took advantage of the runner ups blunder at the last to get up close home. He looked a real monkey last year but showed battling qualities here which will stand him in good stead going forward. He is only a novice up until November and looks set for a chasing career sooner rather than later.

Vintage Vinnie (13:15 Cheltenham)

23rd October 2015 - Cheltenham - He settled well in front here which is a far cry to how it looked in his early days. He was still going well in front when crumpling on landing three out and too early to be definitive regarding where he would have finished. The way the holdup horses came through late would add to the notion that he would not have been the likeliest winner. This was still a really positive run and I especially liked the way he came back travelling well after nearly falling at the 13th fence. Those two mistakes aside he jumped really well and I would tend to mark this run up as a positive despite his late exit. He could prove to be a very reliable and simple trade in the coming weeks.

23rd January 2015 - Doncaster - He enjoyed a reasonably untroubled lead until being caught on the run in. he jumped left at a few and lugged left when coming under a drive. He has his quirks but also has some ability.

12th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He was very reluctant at the start and overly keen in the race. He looks one to avoid until he proves otherwise.

Twelve Roses (13:15 Cheltenham)

12th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - He was held up in last spot and made up a lot of ground to take fourth spot up the hill.

Guitar Pete (13:35 Punchestown)

3rd May 2014 - Punchestown - He was out the back until staying on late into 6th spot. He finished close to the same horses that he ran next to at Cheltenham so it is more than possible that they are simply an ordinary bunch. They went fast and stopped at Aintree last time whereas today the WM pace setter was allowed a free lead and RW dictated the pace to suit his own horse. It could also be that all of the first three home in the Triumph merely paid for those efforts today. I will remain open minded even though my preferred theory as things stand is that they are all okay without being top class.

3rd April 2014 - Aintree - He was held up nearly last by PC and still had plenty to do before the last. He was advantaged by the fast pace and by the fact that quite a few of the leaders were very keen and may well have struggled to get home. PC and DH both said that the Cheltenham hill was too much for him and he is a better horse on a flat track. DH felt they had been making too much use of him. The final circuit time was 0.6 seconds slower than The New One and the overall figure was slower.

14th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - WM said he thought the English would be too good!! Perhaps this is not the strongest form.

Cogry (13:50 Cheltenham)

18th April 2015 - Ayr - This was another positive run on ground that would have been far too quick for him. He made a few errors but I thought that was most likely due to him going a little bit faster than ideal in the prevailing conditions. He still might well have been in the first four or five but for falling four out. He remains on the early shortlist for the Welsh National. The conditions of that race will suit him well; he is a course winner and should stay the three and a half mile plus trip. The stable like to go for the race which might be a big point in his favour in the early ante post markets particularly as he is less likely to get his ideal conditions in his prep runs.

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He looks like a Welsh National type after proving his stamina here. He will be better still on very soft ground and, as he has already won on heavy ground at Chepstow, I would be surprised if that was not the race on their minds for next season.

7th February 2015 - Warwick - he could not handle the drop in trip to two miles and five furlongs recently even on very testing ground. This effort merely confirms him as a real stayer that appreciates soft ground. He is reliable and has a good attitude and probably has a decent race in him off 136.

Sego Success (13:50 Cheltenham)

11th October 2015 - Chepstow - He travelled as well as anything here and should be seriously marked up on this effort not least because the King yard have not yet started to fire. There are a few possible Welsh national horses in this field and he looks the most interesting at this stage. He looked a non-stayer over four miles plus at Cheltenham but might last out over the shorter trip here at the end of December.

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He was strongly fancied by the yard and ran really well before appearing not to stay.

25th October 2014 - Chepstow - The word from the AK yard was that he was big and burly and would need the run. He was a length and a half down on the three leaders when smashing the fourth last fence which cost him several lengths and plenty of momentum. He was given an easy time of it after that mistake and can be seriously marked up on his finishing position.

Audacious Plan (13:50 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - He travelled especially well for the second race running and can continue as an interesting horse to keep an eye on, at least for

trading purposes. He lacks a turn of foot and should be better suited to a faster run race than this and/or a more severe test of stamina.

11th October 2015 - Chepstow He was another to travel well today and he can be expected to improve for a yard not yet hitting top gear.

Knockanrawley (13:50 Cheltenham)

29th December 2014 - Newbury - He pulled hard and didn't get home last time so was dropped out here but didn't do a lot out the back according to JM. He won this through his stamina but looked a tough ride.

Azure Fly (13:50 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - He made an error down the far side followed by a serious one three out and yet another one two out. he was not the most fluent over the last and, as a consequence, he was not able to get in a position to attack from the last. The fences have to be jumped so he cannot be counted as unlucky; nonetheless, it is also fair to say that he would have gone close even without just the mistake three out which cost him several lengths, his momentum and his place as the field ran down the hill. Personally, I would mark him up as a good second at worst with the proviso that his jumping errors need to be borne in mind when assessing his appropriate place in the market. He could be a big price for the 'Old Flowers' and will, in my opinion, hold as strong a chance as any from this field. I would mark his chances down on soft going as, even though he might go on it, he is yet to prove it.

29th December 2014 - Newbury - He has plenty of ability but has generally been one not to trust. He was given a very positive ride in a poor race.

20th October 2014 - Plumpton - Connections avoided Cheltenham for this race as he was badly in at the former. He said he jumped very well and was quite straight over his fences last time out.

It was a weak race he won first time out and he may well have run to form here.

4th August 2014 - He probably has more ability than a mark of 127 would suggest; unfortunately, his habit of hanging badly when coming under pressure has proved to be his Achilles heel. Despite a reasonable enough place to run ratio he remains a difficult horse to trust and has looked a most difficult ride in the finish on more than one occasion.

He is probably best on good or good to soft ground and stays three miles, at least, on a tight track like Market rasen. He has run well for Charlie Deutsch on a couple of occasions and his claim may eventually make the difference between winning and losing for Azure Fly. His trainer generally has a good time of it in September and October so his chances might be at their best then, particularly due to the

weakness of the opposition and the faster ground which usually prevails in the early part of the season.

Just A Par (13:50 Cheltenham)

25th April 2015 - Sandown - This was an eye catching performance on his first try over this extended trip. He could well have won even more easily if not for being less than fluent over the first two railway fences and positively slow over the last of them. Enthusiasm for this effort has to be tempered somewhat due to all bar the runner up of the first few home having their stamina to prove; however, this was still a massive improvement on his previous best and strongly suggests that this step up in distance has been the making of him. He was out the back with a circuit to go but eventually won with plenty in hand after staying on far too powerfully up the hill. He seems to prefer a sound surface given the balance of his profile and could be marked up for a race like the Old Flowers at Cheltenham in November.

8th February 2015 - Exeter - He set a really good clip and stayed on back into second spot from the last. He seemed to be having a good look and think at many of the fences and his hood and blinkers only add to the possibility that he might not be that straightforward. He certainly looks the type to oppose if he were ever trading very short in the right race.

1st January 2015 - Cheltenham - This was his first good run for a while in first time blinkers. He was having to work harder than some to stay with the most and does not look the quickest of horses.

4th April 2014 - Aintree - He is either not good enough or under the cloud like a few from the PN yard. The overall figure was much better than Boston Bob and the final circuit time was 0.6 seconds slower than the BB race. The overall figure of 81 was the second fastest of the meeting.

Le Reve (13:50 Cheltenham)

October 31st 2015 - Ascot - This faster ground and frenetic pace were not for him and he will show more on a softer surface and possibly when competing back at Sandown. The Racing Post Chase also looks a viable target for him in February.

25th April 2015 - Sandown - He was far too keen for his own good and stopped from the last fence thus accentuating the winning margins. I would imagine that his connections have the Newbury Hennessy in mind for his early season target. He just about stayed today and would probably be okay next time if settling better. The fact that all his best form has been when racing right handed is a little off putting as is his poor record round Newbury

21st February 2015 - Kempton - He was easily the second best in this race and can be rated a bit better than his winning margins over the rest. The old Whitbread is surely the race for him.

31st January 2015 - Sandown - This was a good looking performance as he always travelled like the best horse just off the pace. He won with plenty to spare and appears to be very progressive. I remember Lucy Wadham saying this was her Grand National horse after he won at Market rasen over hurdles in February 2013. The bet365 Gold Cup was mentioned as a possible target which is a race where he will have stamina to prove; that said his good course form will be a big plus.

Perfect Candidate (13:50 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - He stayed on strongly up the hill even though he was easily put in his place by the winner. This was another sound run and he will still qualify for a 0-135 race after this.

Upswing (13:50 Cheltenham)

8th February 2014 - Newbury - He was given easily the best ride in the race by AP as all the front group were under pressure from a long way out allowing him to travel easily into the race. He had to work hard from before the last to catch the clear leader who was probably the best horse in the race.

Sausalito Sunrise (13:50 Cheltenham)

11th October 2015 - Chepstow - he appeared to be the only danger to the winner early in the home straight before dropping out rapidly and being pulled up in worrying fashion.

26th December 2014 - Kempton - he is said to be the yard's RSA horse and he looked to be a danger when falling six out. I have no strong feelings about which one would have won but this Hobbs horse looked booked for a good second at worst.

12th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He was strong in the market probably due to being 8lbs off with the favourite for his beating here last time. I thought he jumped better today and yet he still finished tired. It could just be a case of the Pipe horse being so good when enjoying a free lead that most three mile chasers would end up struggling to get home. He could be better in a faster run race with more cover. Having been beaten well twice he might now be underrated against one or two highly rated hurdlers with sexier profiles than him - as most horses would struggle to cope with the winner given this scenario.

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - The Hobbs yard is in the very best of form at this meeting which will not always be the case. It wasn't that he jumped badly; more that he was less fluent than a couple of his chief rivals. He looked much more stamina than speed but the tired way he saw out the finish implies he was going faster than he could manage; certainly, this is how it looked. He put in tired leaps at the third and second last flight and finished second due to nothing else seeing out the race.

25th October 2014 - Chepstow - PH states that this is his RSA horse and will therefore head for the Paddy Power meeting next. He jumped round well here but had little to beat in the context of the race as most of the field would not have wanted to finish too close to a horse rated 145 over hurdles.

23rd April 2014 - Perth - He drew away from his rivals for the second race in a row. However, once again this was a very weak race as the favourite looked one paced once again.

12th April 2014 - Bangor - He took it up a long way out and quickly went clear. He won with any amount in hand but this was a very bad race and he did no more than one would have expected.

Rigadin De Beauchene (13:50 Cheltenham)

14th February 2015 - Haydock - He hit the first and a few more after.

15th February 2014 - Haydock - The ground was beyond terrible and any horse can be forgiven a poor run. He will be raised 8 - 10 pounds for beating plenty of rivals that could not act on this bottomless going.

Soll (13:50 Cheltenham)

28th February 2015 - Newbury - The stable move has obviously done him a lot of good and probably has resulted in him being more fit now. He travelled better than I have ever seen him in these first time blinkers. He is now up to 146 but has ruin well off 139 for his previous trainer and is also yet to get his ground whilst under the care of Pipe. The Midland National might come too soon but the Scottish National would be a possible and he would have claims on soft going. He should be rated more on his latest two runs than on the balance of his previous profile.

1st February 2014 - Sandown - He just wasn't fluent enough to get back at the leaders but still ran well.

Black Thunder (13:50 Cheltenham)

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He broke a blood vessel and the fact that he will have been racing faster than ideal on this quicker ground will not have helped his cause. He ran a very solid race in the circumstances and remains an extremely talented and reliable chaser whose form has been disguised by his latest two finishing efforts in races that did not suit. Last time out he would have been the most unsuited to the slow pace behind Many Clouds and here he was flat to the boards all the way before staying on for seventh spot. The Scottish National or Betfred Gold Cup could be more to his liking providing he recovers from his BBV and gets to race on his favoured soft ground. Good to soft might be okay over the longer trip.

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - I think it very likely that he lost all chance due to the race being run at a sedate gallop. One could ask why he did not push the pace more himself; nonetheless, at Sandown last time out he did idle when in front so perhaps his connections had that at the back of their minds. It is interesting to listen to the reaction of the majority when a favourite flops as opposed to an outsider. If Black Thunder had gone into the Betbright Cup Chase as the highest rated horse and the short priced favourite, people would have been much quicker to forgive him this run due to the slow pace. As an 8/1 outsider, his Gold Cup chances have immediately been dismissed and, consequently, he may well be a little forgotten the next time he gets his conditions.

I think it is very likely that the Gold Cup would be flying too high for him; however, in the unlikely event of the ground riding heavy in March he would hold a leading chance alongside today's winner Many Clouds. More likely, the ground will not be soft enough for him and he will have to wait for a more suitable contest - the Bet365 Cup or the Scottish National would be possible targets given his optimum conditions.

5th December 2014 - Sandown - he got in a little close at the first of the railway Fences second time round which is one of the first mistakes I can remember him making. He really is a super jumper over big fences and, although he had relatively little to beat here I can see him winning a decent prize this season given three miles plus and testing ground (The Argento Chase has been mentioned). He idled significantly when clear on the run in which might be worth remembering for the future.

1st November 2014 - Ascot - He was the only horse to come from well off the pace and go close he should be seriously marked up for this performance especially as he will be better still on softer ground. He is a safe and reliable jumper. PN wanted to have a crack at the Grade One Chase at Down royal this weekend which probably adds to the notion that he is well handicapped. He could be the sort for a soft ground Hennessy.

10th October 2014 - It was rather surprising to see him being so heavily supported prior to this race. Firstly, because he was the stable second string and secondly because he has appeared to be more about stamina than speed and will surely need further than this extended two and a half mile trip round a tight track to be

seen at his best. Furthermore, due to the race conditions Black Thunder was extremely badly in according to the handicapper; therefore, if he had managed to win this contest he would have been raised to a mark well beyond his level of ability. Given that scenario he would have struggled to be competitive for quite some time.

All things considered, he has run as well as can be expected in a race which did not see him in his best light. He will surely be suited to three miles plus on soft ground and can be marked up when he gets his ideal conditions

The Romford Pele (13:50 Cheltenham)

17th October 2014 - Cheltenham - With the favourite running like she badly needed the run this race took very little winning and as a consequence he may be overrated next time. He jumped well enough and appears to be getting his act together; however, the second horse is a 135 runner masquerading as a 144 horse and the third horse is a 120 horse receiving just 10lbs from the Curtis charge.

2nd May 2014 - Punchestown - He was given a lot to do and stayed on well off an especially fast pace. This was an excellent round of jumping compared to his previous attempts. It is only the Kempton race where he has appeared to be especially bad and it may be that he prefers a more galloping track like this one. He appears to be a particularly well handicapped horse over hurdles and fences but is also the type to cost you a lot of money waiting for the day. He is proven on heavy ground and those conditions may help his often sluggish jumping. The first aim today appeared to be to get him settled and get him jumping so, in that sense, this race was probably a huge success.

Godsmejudge (13:50 Cheltenham)

12th April 2014 - Ayr - He was prominent all the way which is generally what you want in this race. He was probably slightly unlucky to meet a well handicapped outsider in the winner. He stayed on powerfully from the last but could not quite reel in the winner.

1st March 2014 - Doncaster - He was said to be going well at home. he scoped badly last time and was thought to have an each way chance. He was prominent for a long way but was dropping out well before the home turn.

Shotgun Paddy (13:50 Cheltenham)

10th January 2015 - Warwick - He is pretty consistent in these long distance contests on testing ground. He can be competitive again off his current mark given his optimum conditions.

11th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - The ground was too fast and he jumped appallingly so how he nearly won his beyond belief. He is still well in when he gets his ground - He looks a Welsh national but maybe handicapped out of that now. Derek O' Connor - was brilliant and took a much better line round the final turn which got him back into it when he looked beaten for about the tenth time.

11th January 2014 - Warwick - He was clearly well treated and won with some authority after hugging the inside rail and jumping in very fluent fashion. LA feels he is more Welsh national for next year and clearly sees him as a good handicapper. His form with Black Thunder looks all the better for this. LA felt that here and Chepstow were his tracks which alluded to him being less well suited to Haydock and Lingfield.

Johns Spirit (14:25 Cheltenham)

25th October 2015 - Aintree - He had run below his best on each of his three tries round here in the past. He made a really bad blunder at the 10th fence but was going okay when badly hampered at the next which effectively put him out of the contest. His form round the old course at Cheltenham since his novice days reads: 1 1 1 2 - moreover, he finished a head down in the Paddy Power in 2014 off 156 on unsuitably soft ground. Provided the stable is in better form by then he can be seriously marked up on this, particularly as he failed to finish the race which will do his Paddy Power price no harm at all. His chances there would be even more obvious should the two horses rated above him in the entries (Third Intention and Mr Mole) stand their ground. There may be several better handicapped horses than him on the day and one or two of them might well end up finishing in front of him. However, I don't think it is about pounds and lengths in this equation; Johns Spirit would be bang there in the finish of the Ryanair if it was run on the old course earlier in the week and, likewise, is very likely to be there at the last in the Paddy Power irrespective of his weight or rating on the day. He won off low weights in October and November 2013 where he ran off 129 and 139 respectively. Last year he won off 147 and was then narrowly beaten carrying top weight in November off 156. In the 2015 Paddy Power the worst that can happen is for him to once again carry top weight off 1lb more than last season. He could actually be dropped a pound or two for Aintree and will hold a much better chance compared with 2014 if the ground rides good to soft or faster. In November 2014 the race took about 16 seconds longer to complete compared with the other three races in the sequence above.

7th July 2015 - His performance in the Ryanair Chase added further evidence to the notion that he is better suited to the Old Course and does not quite get home over the more stamina sapping New Course. There is a very good chance that he will run extremely well at Cheltenham in October and November for the third year running. He should have won the Paddy Power off top weight in 2014 and could well be there on the run in again this year. I would mark him down at Aintree and prefer him pre New Year as opposed to the spring time - this is probably mostly due to him not

having any suitable races later in the year. If the Byrne Plate and/or the Ryanair were run on the Wednesday his profile might look a little different.

10th April 2015 - Aintree - For future reference I don't think his third place finish is as good as it will read retrospectively when it comes to the 2016 meeting here. He had little behind him that ran any sort of race.

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - This was another top race round here to add to his portfolio. Once again his relatively tame finish reinforced the notion that he is more at home on the old course.

From a time comparison perspective Vautour was about two and a half seconds slower than Uxizandre half way down the back straight but was then ahead of him alongside Irish Saint four out. He 'pulled well clear of Uxizandre' by the line and Irish Saint completed the course in very similar fashion to the Ryanair winner suggesting that the JLT winner 'beat Uxizandre by between 15 and 20 lengths'. This can only be an indicator particularly as Uxizandre had already jumped one fence when I began comparing them at his second and Vautour's first obstacle. However, the time discrepancy is so great that it is hard not to be impressed by the form of the JLT including up to the fourth and fifth home. The four that followed Vautour home are thus likely to be underrated such was their beating on the day.

26th December 2014 - Kempton - He was held up well off a pace set by the best horse in the race that was allowed to race within his limits for most of the contest. He made a move as the pace quickened and held reasonable place claims until walking through the third last flight. The yard is in poor form and the rain probably did not help his cause either. All in all I would mark him up and it is hard to think that he will not run really well for a long way in the Ryanair providing the stable are in better form by then. His profile suggests he is best when fresh and he could well be under rated come March.

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He ran another brilliant race over this old course. He would have won well but for idling in front and I am sure RM would have preferred to go on half way up the run in rather than from the last fence. It is not a question of pounds per lengths with his improvement as he is just likely to keep running the same type of race irrespective of the penalties. He carried 11st 12lbs here and would do no more in next year's Paddy Power off 160 and will run very well again there presuming he is still in good health. Unfortunately, the Ryanair Chase is run on the new course as is the December Gold Cup, as his record suggests he does not quite see that trip out as well. Nevertheless, he could run well in both of those contests even though I would be slightly more wary of the strength of his finishing effort from the last flight.

18th October 2014 - Cheltenham - Jonjo said pre-race that he is much better first time despite his Paddy Power win last year. He will now be raised to a mark of about 155 which will surely prevent him winning here in November. Maybe they will have to go down the graded route now. The Peterborough at Huntingdon must be a

possibility. He won this very smoothly and much more in hand than it appeared. He could be a horse to run well in the Ryanair Chase although he wouldn't be up to actually winning a decent renewal.

13th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - He is clearly handicapped to the hilt but excels at this course and distance

Double Ross (14:25 Cheltenham)

October 31st 2015 - Ascot - He has not looked like staying this trip in any of his previous attempts. It is possible that they were races simply beyond his level irrespective of the trip. Personally, I think what happened here is that this race was run at such a frenetic pace that it was a case of last man standing as horses flew home from well off the pace. Another doubtful stayer in Cantlow closed the field down up the straight and finished a close up fifth. It is difficult to say that Double Ross did not stay three miles today; however, I would still find it difficult to support the possibility of him repeating the apparent quality of this performance - as good as it looked. It has taken an age for him to begin to drop to a winnable mark for the next time he runs round Cheltenham over two and a half miles on soft ground. He has now just been raised back to 153 on the strength of this effort.

6th July 2015 - One could argue that the stable have had little choice in sending Double Ross to compete in so many inappropriate races in a row. Whatever the reasons the outcome is that he is now on a winnable mark provided the right race is found for him. Personally, I would rather see him being a little over faced in the Paddy Power and the December Gold Cup before having a pop at one of the slightly lesser two and a half mile handicaps at Cheltenham. That is not to say that he could not win a top class one given his favoured soft ground; it is just that one would expect at least one or two horses to go into those races on the back of a more progressive profile compared with DR. If he continued to compete in unsuitable races he could easily end up being well handicapped for the Byrne Plate in March.

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He is down to 150 now and it won't be long before he can go for a decent handicap again which will suit him more than each of the latest eight races he has been asked to compete in.

7th February 2015 - Newbury - Once again his stamina for three miles would have to be questioned. He is now down to 152 which is close to a winning mark for him. He is also the sort to easily outrun a three digit price in the Ryanair.

22nd November 2014 - Haydock - He was never in it and unseated his rider when tired and tailed off at the last fence.

1st November 2014 - Wetherby - He ran well and probably didn't stay as Taquin Du Seuil was going nowhere and had lengths to make up on him approaching the final

flight and still managed to beat him. I would have preferred him to drop out so that he might become a viable bet for the Paddy Power in the unlikely event of that being run on testing ground. He is flattered by his finishing position as this will look better on paper than it is in reality.

10th October 2014 - He had just been headed by the favourite when he was seriously hampered after that horse lugged to his left at the fifth last thereby colliding with the Twiston-Davies stable star in mid-air. Colour Squadron was going much the better at the time and, consequently the majority view will be to suggest that Double Ross was beaten at the time of his exit. However, personally, I would say that he was still going second best in the field and was certainly travelling much easier than the eventual winner, Wonderful Charm, who was looking one paced and under pressure. Given the nature of the favourites' collapse, I think it is more than possible that Double Ross would have had another bite of the cherry on the day. I will definitely not be marking him down on this effort and, indeed will be keen to shortlist him off his current mark whenever he gets to race on his favoured testing ground over a trip of about two and half miles. Presumably, the Paddy Power Chase will be on his agenda next and, although one would have to think that there will be one or two better handicapped horses in the field, he is still a horse that I could see running well for a long way at a double figure price off his current mark of 152. His prominent style of racing implies that in a competitive handicap chase like the Paddy Power he might be viewed as more of a trading possibility.

13th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - He is a really sound marker for the form as he is a top class experienced handicapper. One or two of these should improve past him. The overall time was a bit slower than the Ryanair; however, the final circuit time was 1.8 seconds quicker and the final split was 1.6 seconds quicker.

25th January 2014 - Cheltenham - he ran another top race and is very reliable on this testing ground. The problem will be when he races on better going off this elevated mark when he will surely struggle.

1st January 2014 - Cheltenham - He handled the conditions far better than the rest and won easily after a hefty mistake at the first fence. He will be raised seven or eight for this and will probably then have to race on ground most of his rivals will handle.

Darna (14:25 Cheltenham)

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He was in the right place given this sedate gallop. He is a nine-year-old now raised to a career high mark of 147 and he is unlikely to benefit from such an easy trip again. The leaders were already about 6 seconds behind the pace set by Uxizandre with a circuit to go and almost 10 seconds behind half way down the back straight. This discrepancy in times was then more or less maintained to the line.

1st January 2015 - Cheltenham - He ran well again on ground that would be too testing for him.

13th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He was close to the pace and probably ran better than his finishing position suggests in relation to the eventual second, third and fourth home.

My best guess of what happened here is that Aiden Coleman held a reasonable lead from the third fence until the first in the back straight on the final circuit. This was despite him taking two seconds longer to negotiate this part of the course in comparison with Little Jon earlier on in the day. Therefore he was giving his horse an easy trip for all that period of time and, as an added bonus the two or three horses that were following him did not turn out to be his chief dangers in the finish which accentuates the advantage he held over the horses that eventually finished in the places.

From the first in the back straight until the fourth last AC injected real pace into the race as he was four seconds quicker than Little Jon during this stage and two seconds quicker than Sew On Target. Barrakilla was unable to stay with this pace and dropped off which left Splash Of Ginge as the only serious looking rival from five out. Unfortunately, he fell at the next leaving Niceonefrankie miles clear of Edgardo Sol who had never been in it plus the staying on again Barrakilla.

No wonder then that he was five seconds slower than Champagne West from the last to the finishing line. This slow finish was of no concern as he had five seconds in hand on Barrakilla at the second last and still enjoyed a four second advantage at the last before holding on by just over a second or about six lengths. Furthermore, it wasn't as if Barrakilla was quickening as he was merely slowing down less than the winner. The fact that Carrigmorna King caught up many lengths on the eventual runner up from the third last to the line supports this notion.

Boondooma (14:25 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - This was a fantastic effort especially considering that he had been off the track for almost a year. He was very free going down and likewise in the race as he set a furious early gallop alongside Next Sensation. The three horses that tried to stay close with him all finished a distance behind and Boondooma finished tired and took more than three seconds longer to complete from the fourth last to the line in comparison to Art Mauresque later on in the day. It was the holdup horses that filled the next few places which adds to the merit of this performance. He heads next for the Paddy Power with a couple of negatives next to his name. Firstly, he will be raised substantially for this win and secondly, although he prefers to race on a soft surface, the more testing the ground the more doubts one would have regarding his ability to stay the extra half mile. Nonetheless, he is a progressive horse that might easily improve an awful lot before his next race. The fact that his jockey was able to get a rest into him here augers well for his Paddy Power bid because, although he will presumably be ridden very

positively once again, he clearly has the potential to travel and jump equally well when tracking the pace. There are a lot of horses in this division that have been round the block more than once and he will be one of the few in the group open to massive improvement.

20th December 2014 - Haydock - He led all the way and ran them ragged in behind. Not sure what the form amounts to but this was a good run on testing ground. He has progressed well in his three chases to date.

Kings Palace (14:25 Cheltenham)

15th October 2015 - if we ignore his Cheltenham Festival runs he is unbeaten in six completed efforts over obstacles thus far. He's proved very effective in small field hurdle and chase races when allowed a free lead. Unfortunately in both of his Cheltenham festival contests he has been taken on for the lead and looked extremely vulnerable up the hill. He is by King's Theatre which would suggest that there is at least a reasonable possibility that he will continue to be more at home when racing on a sounder surface. His form has rather tapered off as we have gone into the second half of the season; however, this might simply be to do with the fact that he has been unsuited to be taken on for that lead when racing in the more competitive festival contests. When he competed at Newbury in his Cheltenham Festival prep race in early February he took 20 seconds longer than Coneygree to complete the course and distance. I think this is something to bear in mind when assessing the level of his ability coming into this new season.

To conclude, I would be keener on his chances in early-season small field 3 mile chases, particularly where he looks likely to benefit from an easy lead. I would have some concerns of his ability to last out 3 miles plus should the ground ride testing even in those small field events. Until he proves otherwise I would treat him as a small field bully who is likely to be found wanting each time he competes in a high-class competitive chase over 3 miles plus. David Pipe mentioned the Paddy Power Chase as a possible early-season target for him; it certainly will be interesting to see him compete over the intermediate trip at Cheltenham when taken on for the lead. I don't think he has the type of profile to be on my mind for a race as competitive as the Paddy Power; however, it will still bring new evidence to the table and will therefore be of great interest.

11th March 2015 - Cheltenham - For the second year in a row he found nothing up the hill after being taken on for the lead. Until he shows something different he looks a small field bully providing he can dictate the pace of the race. He also made too many mistakes to give himself any chance. This is the second time he has competed at the festival with a strong looking profile from racing in weakly contested small field affairs.

7th February 2015 - Newbury - He remains as short as 4/1 for the RSA despite taking 20 seconds longer than Coneygree to complete this course. The biggest concern for me is that his novice chase runs mirror those novice hurdle efforts

before he flopped in the Albert Bartlett. He was able to jog round again here and has yet to be tested off a real pace over his fences. This is not the same as saying he cannot win the RSA, it is just that it leaves him with more to prove than his price would suggest.

12th December 2014 - Cheltenham - This was another exhibition of jumping as he led all the way and barely saw another horse. Once again it was similar to one or two of his small field novice hurdle wins round here last season. He had something in reserve for the climb up the hill but how much is this to do with him enjoying such an easy lead?

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - The message said he had schooled very well and was expected to win. He jumped brilliantly on this chasing debut and could be named as the winner a long way from home. It was all rather similar to his early novice hurdle successes last season. It would be very interesting to see him run in a bigger field with two or three taking him on though we may not get to see this happen until the RSA Chase. Before then he is likely to follow his hurdle path and prove difficult to beat in these small field affairs.

14th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - He has won with unchallenged leads and this is an important lesson to remember. Taken on all the way he stopped before the hill.

Shanpallas (14:25 Cheltenham)

25th January 2014 - Cheltenham - We were told that this was a sighter for him today. He was out the back and never put in the race. His jumping was less than fluent at times.

Cocktails At Dawn (14:25 Cheltenham)

10th October 2015 - Chepstow - He has now won two chases in a row without seeing another horse. He had previously appeared to be far from the hardiest of horses which is a trait I will be watching out for when he is unable to enjoy such an easy lead. On the plus side he was giving a penalty to plenty of decent 140+ sorts here and on the negative he was the only one in the field with previous chasing experience. Last time out most of his rivals did not jump well enough to stay with him and I think there will be plenty of chasers in training that have achieved far more than he has in being raised from 133 to 153. This is not to say that he might not go in again given another soft lead; however, his next race is said to be the Paddy Power. The competitive nature of that contest would be a huge concern as would the potential for much softer ground in the middle of November.

18th April 2015 - Sandown - He probably appreciated the better ground here but still has to go down as looking a lot better than this appeared to be as most of the horses in behind made far too many errors to keep up with him. I would assume

that he is just as likely to regress to mean, particularly off 145, and appear unreliable in the finish in future.

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - I am not sure he is battle hardened enough for this type of race just yet but he certainly has plenty of ability and this performance is better than it reads in the finish. The stable won a small novice hurdle with him in April 14 after he was highly tried previously. It is possible they will want to give him a confidence booster to finish his novice chase season as well.

1st November 2014 - Ascot - NH "will improve for run but working well" - he made a blunder at the 9th fence which meant he was playing catch up on a day when it paid to lead. Unlike the winner he was not touched up the home straight and it would be no surprise to see him reverse this form off revised terms.

Generous Ransom (14:25 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - I was assuming pre-race that this was his prep for the Paddy Power for which he would be on my first shortlist - even more so if it comes up soft on the day.

18th April 2015 - Sandown - He probably needs softer ground over this trip especially on such a speed track as this.

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - This ground was nowhere near soft enough for him and resulted in him racing out of his comfort zone for most of the way. Unlike his last run here on softer going he made several minor errors here which appeared to result from him going a stride too fast. He is a lot better than this finish implies and his new mark will not stop him - he is already high on the shortlist for the top two and a half mile races here next season. His connections will have the option of the race here in April and if he were to win that he would seriously reduce his chances for the Paddy Power. He should be strongly marked up if any of the above races take place in soft conditions - he has won in April so the Showers race might be a viable target providing he gets his ground.

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - He travelled extremely well and looked more suited to this stiffer track in comparison with Kempton. His connections seemed to agree he would be better on good or good to soft ground and there is some evidence in his profile to support this notion. He almost certainly hit the front sooner than ideal due to the way the race unfolded so I think he can be marked up significantly on this. That said, two or three pundits on RUK suggested the same so this opinion/hype will be factored into the early markets for Cheltenham. I don't think it will be his new mark that beats him in March.

26th December 2014 - Kempton - he made a crucial mistake down the far side and lost ground. He stayed on strongly up the home straight and will be more effective on softer ground or over slightly further.

Splash of Ginge (14:25 Cheltenham)

October 31st 2015 - Wetherby - This was his prep for the Paddy Power or Hennessy.

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - It might be too early to be sure but he does appear to be a horse that is likely to be suited by big field handicap chases as he does seem to have his limitations exposed in these conditions events. He will need to drop to a mark in the mid-140's to see him on the shortlist for the Paddy Power in November. The stable is not the type to run him today with tomorrow in mind so this scenario is unlikely.

31st January 2015 - Sandown - He looked like he could not jump as well going this way round and I would not be surprised if his connections kept him to left handed tracks from now on.

1st January 2015 - Cheltenham - He probably repeated his last time out run without the late fall. He has now run really well in three of the four meetings here over this sort of trip. The one blip came in a novice race where he was giving a penalty away to higher rated rivals. He was two seconds slower from six out to the line compared with Ptit Zig and was carrying 12lbs less.

13th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He was far from beaten when coming down four out. The way the race was run he comes out with great credit for this performance, the quality of which is disguised by his fall at the fourth last fence.

My best guess of what happened here is that Aiden Coleman held a reasonable lead from the third fence until the first in the back straight on the final circuit. This was despite him taking two seconds longer to negotiate this part of the course in comparison with Little Jon earlier on in the day. Therefore he was giving his horse an easy trip for all that period of time and, as an added bonus the two or three horses that were following him did not turn out to be his chief dangers in the finish which accentuates the advantage he held over the horses that eventually finished in the places.

From the first in the back straight until the fourth last AC injected real pace into the race as he was four seconds quicker than Little Jon during this stage and two seconds quicker than Sew On Target. Barrakilla was unable to stay with this pace and dropped off which left Splash Of Ginge as the only serious looking rival from five out. Unfortunately, he fell at the next leaving Niceonefrankie miles clear of Edgardo Sol who had never been in it plus the staying on again Barrakilla.

No wonder then that he was five seconds slower than Champagne West from the last to the finishing line. This slow finish was of no concern as he had five seconds in hand on Barrakilla at the second last and still enjoyed a four second advantage at the last before holding on by just over a second or about six lengths. Furthermore, it wasn't as if Barrakilla was quickening as he was merely slowing down less than

the winner. The fact that Carrigmorna King caught up many lengths on the eventual runner up from the third last to the line supports this notion.

14th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He had a lot to do at the weights and, in theory, would have had to run to 160+ to trouble the runner up. That said he was still a little disappointing but will have other days in lesser company.

18th October 2014 - Cheltenham - His winning margin of 9L won't do him any favours with the handicapper especially as the runner up looks flattered by his pre-race rating of 148. On the plus side it was good to see him put in a good round of jumping after the debacle of his first effort. He was better on soft over hurdles so it will be interesting to see how high he can go when he gets his ideal conditions. The NTD yard are not known for their plots so it might have to be the Jewson rather than the novice handicap chase as his festival target.

11th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - He paid for trying to keep up with a top class all the way winner. The winner was 0.7 seconds slower than Jezki over the final circuit and his finishing split was 1.4 slower.

8th February 2014 - Newbury - He was suited by the ground and by leading which implies he will find it difficult when raised especially as he will not always be racing on such horrible ground. When conditions are bottomless in future he will no doubt attempt to make all again.

Cloud Creeper (14:25 Cheltenham)

9th October 2015 - Newton abbot - The word soft in the official description would not have been deemed to be in his favour. The time of the race, however, would suggest that it was faster ground compared with the official description. He is less progressive than one or two of these and I maintain the view that he is slightly flattered by his 152 mark. That said he ran perfectly okay for the eighth race in a row.

26th September 2015 - Market Rasen - I thought he was flattered by his 152 rating going into this contest and I think an awful lot will have to go right for him to win a decent prize off his new mark of 150. The way he was kept wide and jumped left most of the way suggests that he might improve for going left handed. His earlier wins right handed were earned when racing off much lower marks.

9th May 2015 - Haydock - He ran a great race here as he was giving the all the way winner a lot of weight. In my opinion he is a little flattered by his mark which adds further merit to this effort.

15th April 2015 - Cheltenham - On the strength of this one performance I think there will be far better horses than him rated 150 going into the new season.

Bennys Mist (14:25 Cheltenham)

28th February 2015 - Newbury - He may have thrown his mark away on ground that would not have been soft enough for him. He can improve on this on heavy and did finish miles clear of the third here even though it is open to debate whether or not he can improve enough to win off 143. He has won well here before as well as twice round Wincanton on testing going.

31st January 2015 - Sandown - He looked back to his best on this soft ground. This trip was just beyond him but he should be kept in mind whilst the ground is as it is when he returns to a slightly shorter trip. His latest two wins have both come at Wincanton on heavy ground over two miles and five furlongs.

18th October 2014 - Cheltenham - he looks high enough in the ratings off 140. Last season VW got him dropped by running him over three miles plus at Aintree. He can win a good prize when he is dropped a little and particularly when he races on soft ground when the VW yard are in big form.

Oscar Rock (14:25 Cheltenham)

26th September 2015 - Market Rasen - One would assume he will come on for this seasonal debut and will, no doubt, have to if he is to be competitive in the Paddy Power off his 155 rating. The form of this does not add up to much but he travelled and jumped well and could do no more than win in such comfortable fashion.

18th April 2015 - Ayr - He was a little deliberate over several fences and lost ground at two or three down the far side. It was not that he made any serious errors more that he was not quite as fluent at a couple compared with one or two others. This is only his fourth chase so he has every right to keep on improving. He was probably travelling best when being hampered three out.

23rd April 2014 - Perth - He just looks extremely one paced and, unless fences improves him dramatically, he looks one for the four miler rather than the RSA Chase.

Next Sensation (14:25 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - He paid for taking the winner on early doors by finishing legless and not getting up the hill. He needed three races to warm up (or acquire a festival mark) last season and my feelings before this race were that, if he were mine, I would prefer to see him back in the Grand Annual off a mark not too far in advance of the one he won off last season. He will obviously be dropped less quickly than he was raised and the best his connections can hope for is probably a mark in the late 140's.

9th April 2015 - Aintree - He went too fast but the way he dropped out in a matter of strides also points to him having left his race at Cheltenham.

13th March 2015 - Cheltenham - Unlike last year he was held onto in front and had plenty in reserve at the finish. His final circuit time was about two seconds slower than Coneygree.

29th November 2014 - Newbury - This was his first sign of a return to form this season on his third run. He improved a lot in a short space of time over the course of three or four runs last season and it is possible that this was a marker for a return to form especially when he races on less taxing ground.

1st November 2014 - Ascot - He made a couple of mistakes early on when taken on for the lead and headed by the winner. Maybe they did not want to push him clear first time out but this was a day when that would have been the right strategy.

5th April 2014 - Aintree - He led as predicted but did not go clear and was easily reeled in by two out and well beaten soon after. He stopped to nothing approaching the last and tired badly and probably was simply out of his depth. The overall figure of 82 was the fastest of the meeting.

Present View (14:25 Cheltenham)

October 31st 2015 - Ascot - This step up in trip seemed like an afterthought. He is now below the rating he competed so well in the Paddy Power from last year. However, this was still a disappointing performance irrespective of the trip probably being too far for him.

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - This run probably confirms that his March target will be a chase rather than a novice hurdle. He goes for the old Racing Post Chase next and, if successful, his new mark would determine that a speculative try at the Ryanair would probably be the only option. The finishing positions of each of the first five home all point to this being what the handicapper suggests - a good race but a few pounds short of what is often required to win a grade one at the festival.

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He ran really well and probably kicked too early as he was the clear leader three out and was hanging on in the end. He should be better on a sounder surface.

17th October 2014 - Cheltenham - He would probably have held on but for blundering at the last flight. This was a prep run for his first target of the Paddy Power Chase. His chase mark of 144 will not be affected after this and he has every chance of running well in November. One would have to guess that there will be at least two or three better handicapped horses than him in an average year. He has run to a mark just below 140 here which augers well for him should he return to race over hurdles later in the season.

11th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival -He looked like he had a lot in his favour. JS said that he was outpaced early and will need three miles over this trip.

22nd February 2014 - Kempton - He was a blatant none stayer over three miles last time out. He needed to win here to get in the novice handicap at Cheltenham. He was brilliant over his fences as he was prominent all the way. He won comfortably easing down and had more than it looked in hand. He should be seriously marked up on this effort and has to be a contender in March.

Sound Investment (14:25 Cheltenham)

25th October 2015 - Aintree - An excellent win for the Nicholls horse that has developed into a most reliable and progressive chaser. He will be 160 after this win which might be an over estimation of his ability; after all, it is important to remember that here he beat a 12 year old, and a horse that did not jump well enough to stay with this field.

28th February 2015 - Newbury - His new rating of 155 will make life tough especially as this may not have been the best of renewals.

20th December 2014 - Ascot - Another good effort from this reliable chaser. The obvious conclusion to draw here is that he failed to last out on this first try over three miles. He was travelling as well as any at the third last flight but was a spent force well before the last flight. A drop in trip should see him being competitive off a mark close to this one in the near future.

13th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He was a non-runner for the Caspar caviar but these were my pre-race notes. He chased home No Buts last time at Newbury in what was another excellent effort from this consistent chaser that has finished in the three in six of his eight chases so far. There was a lot of talk post-race about him preferring a right handed track; however, I would prefer to remain open minded on that score for now. That said, it would have been understandable if his connections had waited for a suitable race at Sandown where he has won twice before.

He will be jumping on the turn here much more than he would have done at Newbury last time out, so this Cheltenham race should highlight any need he may or may not have for going right handed.

He has been kept on 149 and he can be competitive again off that rating - maybe when stepped up in trip.

28th November 2014 - Newbury - This was another excellent effort from this consistent chaser that has finished in the three in six of his eight chases so far. There was a lot of talk post-race about him preferring a right handed track; however, I would prefer to remain open minded on that score for now. That said he has won twice at Sandown so it would be understandable if he were sent back there. He has been kept on 149 and he can be competitive again off that rating.

8th November 2014 - Sandown - Given an excellent ride he made ground to track the leaders turning for home and won by more than it looked.

8th March 2014 - Sandown - Although he was pleasing to the eye in the finish he beat absolutely nothing.

Art Mauresque (14:25 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - He was about three seconds quicker than Boondooma over the final circuit. This advantage in time was wholly secured from the third last fence onwards; in fact he had been a good couple of seconds slower than the first race winner up until the end of the back straight. This emphasises that this was a slowly run affair followed by an injection of pace from after the third last flight. He was about two seconds quicker from the last to the line which probably tells us as much about how the Dr Newland winner was slowing down up the hill.

Art Mauresque jumped well enough on the whole even though he was a little low at one or two. His chasing experience probably played a significant role in him winning this contest. I am not sure how much he beat in the context of the way this race panned out as the hot favourite crashed out early, the second favourite was never really driven to get in contention and the runner up was making his chasing debut and, at least according to the market, was unfancied. On the other hand he was giving a fair amount of weight to the next two home and he won going away with plenty to spare.

9th October 2015 - Newton abbot - He jumped really well out in front and is likely to come on for this seasonal debut. The jury is out regarding the extent of his stamina as he beat little over this sort of trip at Kempton in May. On the limited evidence available I would prefer to be on his side when he is racing round the sharper tracks rather than the more galloping ones. I would be fairly confident that he could be effective making all when dropped back to two miles.

30th July 2014 - He clearly joined the Paul Nicholls yard with a big reputation a notion which is supported by the fact that he made his debut for the stable in a Grade two hurdle race and started as the 7/2 second favourite. Apparently the intention was to front run on this first start; however, not only did he fail to get to the front, but he also ran green and was the first of the principles to be beaten. He was dropped in class for his second and final start of the season at Ascot where, on paper, he appears to have run well having only been beaten two necks into third place; however, the reality is very different as the five length leader Wilde Blue Yonder fell at the last leaving Wadswick Court five lengths clear on the run in; unfortunately, he then idled badly and waited for the favourite, Mountain King, to join him on the line with Art Mauresque staying on close behind. The Nicholls horse is massively flattered by his proximity to the front two and his true worth here would be as a distant fourth.

Annacotty (14:25 Cheltenham)

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - He was outpaced over this trip with three front runners to compete with. He was the only one of the four usual front runners to have copper bottomed stamina for this trip on this soft going and the obvious conclusion to draw is that he may well improve again over further. His win on soft ground at Kempton over three miles adds a little substance to this supposition. This form does not add up to much in narrowly beating a 13-year-old and three or four horses that failed to get up the hill.

His connections were talking post-race about how he will be better still on a sound surface; nonetheless, this notion has yet to be supported in his racecourse appearances. He might well improve for the three miles plus handicap on the first day of the festival. One could also argue that good to soft going would help him see out the trip.

Either way, he will now be raised to a mark of about 150 and it would be surprising if there are not at least one or two lurking lower down the handicap that will have a lot more in hand. Before then Annacotty might head for Kempton and, therefore, returns to the scene of his grade one winning performance. On that day he led all the way and appeared to win, at least in part, due to handling the testing ground better than his rivals. His jockey on the day stated post-race that he was able to get a few breathers into him because he was jumping so much better than the rest of the field and gaining lengths at some of the fences.

29th November 2014 - Newbury - he had the blinkers back on here and ran okay up with the pace until weakening from the 14th fence. There is nothing in his profile to suggest that he would have been suited by this trip. A small field chase over two mile and five furlongs up to three miles on soft ground might be more for him especially when he looks likely to lead.

3rd November 2014 - Kempton - The crucial variable here was the fact that his trainer left his blinkers off. He appeared to be a more difficult ride and also jumped out to his left; contrastingly he travelled much more sweetly here in the Feltham in first time blinkers and he jumped straight. He may well improve when the blinkers are back on.

27th July 2014 - He was a 130 rated novice chaser going into the Grade One Feltham Chase after having had five attempts over the larger obstacles. His massively improved display was most likely due to the first time application of blinkers combined with the testing ground. On Boxing Day he was an unconsidered 12/1 shot in a five runner field. However, he jumped really well and also travelled well out in front. His jockey said the ground rode heavy and he was able to fill him up between fences as he was never taken on; this could be useful information to remember for another day. The reason he was not taken on was due, at least in part, to Annacotty taking lengths out of the field at several fences.

A good judge at the course mentioned that the horse looked shell shocked after the race and expressed some concerns regarding his ability to reproduce this run with blinkers on for a second time. My notes included the point that he will be unlikely to enjoy such an easy trip again and looked one to be wary of due to the pleasing nature of this win; furthermore, the RSA Chase will be nothing like this contest.

As it turned out, he did run another top race next time when beating all bar the potentially well handicapped Indian Castle at Cheltenham on heavy ground in January before heading for the RSA Chase for his final start of the season. My theory about his suitability for this contest was not tested out as he had no chance on the prevailing good ground as his trainer pointed out pre-race. The overall time of the RSA was comfortably the quickest of the day and the final split and circuit times compare very favourably with those in the Champion Chase. I am open minded as to whether or not he is well handicapped off 146; however, the fact that he needs very soft ground to be seen at his best means that there is more than a chance his mark will be dropped before he has the opportunity to run in his optimum conditions.

Buywise (14:25 Cheltenham)

25th October 2015 - Aintree - I don't think that the level gallop often found in races on a flat track suit him as much as the stop start affairs which are more usual on the undulations at Cheltenham. He makes plenty of mistakes and probably gets more opportunity to catch up on the uphill sections round Cheltenham as opposed to here where the horses did not come back to him and he consequently had to work that much harder.

The Paddy Power is really a race for second season chasers and will probably be won by one again this season; however, he has started at a single figure price and ran well in each of his last three visits to the course and 5/2, 7/1 and 15/2 does not take into account the likelihood of him making too many errors to stay close enough to challenge up the hill. If he gets soft ground, a fast gallop and can manage to jump adequately then his mark of 147 offers him every chance of being competitive in November. There are quite a few 'ifs' there and, even with conditions in his favour, I would still require 20/1 and possibly more to take a chance on him. The difference with him now after a few disappointing rounds of jumping is that he just might be 20/1 and possibly even bigger on the exchanges.

11th April 2015 - Aintree - He was beaten so far out it would be difficult to isolate the distance as being the crucial variable. On the balance of his profile he would, in theory be well up to winning a decent race on very soft ground off his current mark if he ever puts in a clear round.

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He was possibly the horse most inconvenienced by the slow pace as I think he will do better with horses coming back to him. Once again he appeared to be an unlucky loser but once again he wasn't unfortunate in any way. Even off this sedate pace he hit the third last and the fifth last plus was less than fluent at one or two others. His late burst is pleasing to the eye and

usually results in us all saying "if he had jumped better...." - he might jump with more fluency in the future and he could easily repeat his win of last year at the April meeting here. Unless he proves otherwise, however, I would tend to prefer to leave him alone and, perhaps, view him as potential saver material only when the ground rides heavy and the markets have long forgotten him. The main problem with him is that his finishing effort is the thing that is in the fore of everyone's minds rather than the reason why he has put himself in such a position in the first place. When the markets have a more balanced response to his various idiosyncrasies he might become of interest again. The leaders were already about 6 seconds behind the pace set by Uxizandre with a circuit to go and almost 10 seconds behind half way down the back straight. This discrepancy in times was then more or less maintained to the line.

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - he is definitely one that would have been helped by a stronger gallop. He stayed on well but, perhaps, didn't quite have that classy speed of the winner and also Oscar Whisky. He has been kept on 146 and I could see him routing a field off that mark given very soft ground and a fast pace over this sort of trip. EW has spent plenty of time educating him over this course that it would be silly to go elsewhere, particularly as this was arguably his best round of jumping at Cheltenham by some way. The December Gold Cup beckons as the ground is likely to be soft and the stiffer track will also be in his favour. The only negative is that he is likely to open at a single figure price.

Irish Cavalier (14:25 Cheltenham)

9th October 2015 - Newton abbot - He drew clear from two out and eventually held on with a bit to spare from a runner up that was ridden too far off the pace to have any chance. The third home will probably improve and the fourth horse to finish is less progressive than most of these. He has now been raised to what appears to be a challenging mark of 156 but it was a decent enough pot.

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - The yard do very well here from few runners. He was out the back and being scrubbed along from a long way out before eventually winning with plenty in hand as he outstayed horses that had made their moves earlier. It would be no surprise to see him end up back at the festival for the three miler next season off a lower mark than the one he has now as the stable are often quite canny in these matters.

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - This was his first try over this trip and only his third ever chase. he has run well in all three so far and looks primed to win a decent novice event soon.

21st November 2014 - Ascot - He travelled and jumped well for most of the race and was not quite good enough at the weights.

Monetaire (14:25 Cheltenham)

12th March 2015 - Cheltenham - he was one of the two horses most disadvantaged by the standing start as he was caught flat footed and lost several lengths. The slow pace gave him a much easier time back into the race but also meant he had to close up on horses lengths in front that had not expended as much energy as they would have done if forced to go a faster gallop. On balance I would mark him up significantly for this run not least because this was only his third start since joining the Pipe yard. Although he is a nine-year-old his inexperience would give him every chance of improving again on this run and see him competitive off 143. I certainly think that his connections will feel they can have another go with him. Paddy Power in November or wait until March?? His age and the stable profile would suggest that they will have a go in November and then see where they stand after that. The leaders were already about 6 seconds behind the pace set by Uxizandre with a circuit to go and almost 10 seconds behind half way down the back straight. This discrepancy in times was then more or less maintained to the line.

29th November 2014 - Newbury - This was only his second run for the yard and, after his excellent first effort he looked just the sort that the yard might have a festival target in mind for. The first two home drew well clear of the third horse and as things stand, I would expect the front two to remain competitive after this. Last season bottom weight in the Byrne Group Plate equated to a mark of 131 and the Grand Annual bottom weight was rated 136 so he is in the right area now. It will be interesting to see what they do next with him as, the fact that he is already an eight-year-old might result in them getting on with him now rather than taking a chance of him being right in March - we shall see.

14th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He hit the first hard and lost a few lengths and did remarkably well to get back into it - he looked a danger when losing momentum with a mistake at the fourth last and yet still looked the likeliest winner after two out. He stays further and is probably extremely well in. The Pipe yard is unlikely to throw away his mark for little money so they may already have his festival target in mind after this.

On His Own (14:45 Punchestown)

13th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He would be the obvious marker for the quality of this contest and the fact that he finished a similar margin in front of Conti compared with 2014 is interesting.

1st November 2014 - Down royal - Is reportedly heading for Cheltenham in march and was presumably not ready for this.

30th April 2014 - Punchestown - This appeared to be a team ride as he set a ridiculous pace before dropping away early on and finishing tailed off. Whether it was by design or by fault his early running certainly played into the hands of his stable and ownership mate Boston Bob. It was interesting to read that RW was leaning towards picking him before WM persuaded him otherwise.

Quantitativeasing (14:45 Punchestown)

11th March 2015 - Cheltenham - This makes 20 races in a row without a win and, although he was in a promising position when getting carried out, the percentage call has to be that he would have found a way of getting beaten anyway.

Dark Spirit (15:00 Cheltenham)

23rd October 2015 - Cheltenham - She won easily at the line but had a much better trip compared with the second home. That said she still drew miles clear of the third home in winning on her seasonal debut for the second year in a row. She has a really good record at this time of the year and was very impressive from the last here. She looked in really good health and should run well again over the next few weeks. The down side is that she could be raised to a mark in the mid 140's after this performance. She might well be better than she has looked previously now that she is proven over three miles and will need to be; furthermore, her poor form figures later last season came when she was set two very difficult tasks so I would not mark her down after the New year just yet.

17th January 2015 - Ascot - She could never get in the race from behind in a contest where it paid to be out in front. She is yet to prove herself over three miles and this run may also have come too soon for her.

3rd January 2015 - Sandown - it is possible that she is flattered by her proximity to the winner as she probably remained close behind as her stamina kicked in as the winner's began to run out. That said, there is more than a possibility that this progressive mare remains well in off 135; moreover, the mare that beat her at Cheltenham, Unique De Cotte, now looks especially well treated off 125.

Invicta Lake (15:00 Cheltenham)

31st January 2015 - Sandown - He ran his best race on soft ground at Cheltenham in November and ran a similar race here with the only difference being that he managed to stay on past every beaten horse today. Based on his overall profile he is likely to be outpaced in his races and will need very soft ground at this level to allow the field to come back to him.

15th November 2014 - Cheltenham - He ran past beaten horses up the hill and is flattered by his finishing position.

Easter Day (15:00 Cheltenham)

24th January 2015 - Cheltenham - He did not appear to hit the third last fence but rather crumpled on landing. He was travelling perfectly well at the time and looked set to be involved in the finish. He will have to be kept on his current mark of 142 and will probably be competitive again soon. His trainer has often targeted the Gold Cup over this sort of trip at Newbury in early March and Easter Day has to be on the trainer's shortlist for that contest. He is also currently prominent in the betting for the old Racing Post Chase at Kempton on 21st February. His profile suggests that he is one to mark up on good to soft and soft ground and be very wary of when he is competing on good going.

17th December 2014 - Newbury - he led at a sedate gallop until collared at the last fence. PN said he would need this which is probably how it panned out.

Gevrey Chambertin (15:00 Cheltenham)

10th March 2015 - Cheltenham - He missed the kick and sulked. He has a lot of ability but is clearly a horse that everything needs to go right for.

17th December 2014 - Newbury - He led all the way in first time blinkers and stayed on strongly when challenged. He had things his own way which has not always been the case and won't always be the way of things in future. The good thing is that he has been dropped plenty for his first five chases so will still be well below his original mark after this.

15th November - Cheltenham - "Not sure Gevrey is man enough" and "just a chance - disappointing" - were the two stable messages. He actually ran a lot better than the RP notes give him credit for. He made a terrible mistake at the first fence but was certainly 'man enough' to recover and stay on behind the principles at the top of the hill before fading thereon in. He has a poor record in big field races save for his Haydock win in November 2013 when he raced prominently and wide and barely saw another horse - (relatively speaking). His profile suggests that he needs three miles but is unproven beyond that distance. He has won on a variety of grounds but personally I would prefer him when racing on soft going.

1st November 2014 - Ascot - Stable said very quirky but well handicapped each way chance - This unrelenting gallop on a sound surface would not have been for him. He will be more at home on a softer surface and I would not mark him down on this at all.

2nd October 2014 - Bangor - He jumped well as he had done on his chasing debut at Ascot in February. It rarely turns out to be a good idea to go chasing at such a late stage of the season and it is probably a blessing that he remains a novice for this season. He looked one paced and beaten in third of three approaching the second last yet ultimately came through late on in a manner which implied he had plenty in hand. I think he was flattered on the day to look so smooth close home; however, the stable word suggested that he was not yet ready even though they felt confident he would still be too good for his two rivals here.

There is a good chance he will take high rank in the staying novice chase department providing he races over three miles and on soft going. He has not always convinced as the most reliable proposition; however, his stable have been rather in and out over the last couple of yours so his apparent inconsistency might just be tied to the yard form rather than anything else. On the other hand, he does appear to be a particularly good jumper and, if and when he does get his act together his exuberant style could lead to him putting in a couple of exciting looking performances and be shorter than he should be in the market thereafter.

15th February 2014 - Ascot - He was very strongly fancied by the yard and even MP had a rare bet on him winning. He looks a natural over these big fences but raced far too keenly to have any chance of finding in the finish. It is to his credit that he was only headed just before the second last after which he was eased quickly before being pulled up. He should be seriously marked up on this and will surely be held up and also should be less buzzy next time.

Milan Bound (15:00 Cheltenham)

9th May 2015 - Haydock - He weakened rapidly in the home straight after travelling well for most of the contest. It is always difficult to know what is going on with these connections. My best guess is that we will see him without blinkers the next time he is off. His profile also suggests he might be better on a sounder surface.

7th February 2015 - Newbury - The fact that the money was down should be remembered as he has had to be kept on the same mark of 126. AP was not hard on him once he realised they had given the leader too much rope.

17th October 2014 - Cheltenham - The betting would suggest he was not off.

Un Ace (15:00 Cheltenham)

15th April 2015 - Cheltenham - He may have got home here in what was a particularly weak race; however, he is yet to actually prove that he stays this distance here in three attempts.

13th December 2014 - Cheltenham - He wasn't the most consistent horse in bumpers or over hurdles but this is now three solid runs in a row over fences. This sequence has probably been aided by having run in three very small field chases culminating in this one where he was runner up but only two finished. He has not got to the track often enough to be categorical about his likes and dislikes; however, on the limited evidence available, we can say that he has yet to prove his ability to race off a fast pace in a race with plenty of runners. He jumped better than the winner here and, even though he got quite close to him at the last, I think the 10lb margin between them according to official ratings might not be too far wide of the mark.

2nd November 2014 - Huntingdon - This was a good jumping performance after his early fall on his chasing debut. He appears to have a good attitude and looks one to trust as a chaser. On the negative side he seems to have had his problems as he only ran three times last season.

17th October 2014 - Cheltenham - He was very buzzy over the first two and fell at the third fence. He did not make a complete mess of it and I would not be put off him over fences just yet. However, his connections will surely want a clear round from him next time out first and foremost.

Morito Du Berlais (15:00 Cheltenham)

29th December 2014 - Newbury - He ran really well off a slow pace that would not have suited him. Providing he is only raised to about 130 I think he will prove to be well in over further or off a faster pace.

22nd November 2014 - Haydock - He may have paid for this quick re-appearance and could be better than this after a break.

14th November 2014 - Cheltenham - "He wasn't ready first time out but still won - I will look for a staying handicap now as his mark looks very fair" PN. When PN says very fair it usually means well in. he ran well and stayed on strongly and is likely to continue to improve.

21st October 2014 - Exeter - PN said he would be winning soon over hurdles and it was just the fact that his daughter was on the other one which led this one to go off at a big price. He travelled really well like a good horse and could be named the winner a long way out.

Sir Mangan (15:00 Cheltenham)

1st February 2014 - Wetherby - DM thought this was his best chance of the day. He battled hard from a long way out but was never very fluent in this horrible ground and will not forget this race in a while.

Atlantic Gold (15:00 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - It was the highlight of the day for me to see CL get his second ever winner here. He raced with real enthusiasm out in front and, whilst one would have to question the level of this form, he did all that was asked on the day and finished off the race in pleasing style. He brushed aside a race fit rival that, to be realistic, might not improve much on this performance in future. He has been raised to 133 after this and, although he may well pick up another race or two this season, his future lies over fences.

Desilvano (15:00 Cheltenham)

19th December 2014 - Ascot - He can be forgiven his hesitation over many of the hurdles on this debut run over the smaller obstacles. On the other hand this form in itself does not add up to much as the trainer of the favourite is going through a particularly lean spell. Hopefully, he will improve on this effort with experience and will need to as on a line through the Tizzard horse this only adds up to a sub 120 performance.

Vendor (15:15 Wetherby)

12th April 2014 - Ayr - He looks well handicapped but ran no race here. He was scruffy over his hurdles and that will be it for the season now. He may well be one to keep in mind over just shy of two and a half miles next season in a big field handicap.

12th March 2014 - Cheltenham Festival - The AK yard were not sure he stayed. He remains well handicapped for a good class two and a half mile (or slightly less) race.

8th February 2014 - Newbury - He was held up last in a race where the place to be was up front. He made good headway without ever looking dangerous. He should be marked up next time in a top handicap over further.

Kuda Huraa (15:15 Wetherby)

1st March 2014 - Newbury - He looked the winner but hit the last hard. The yard thought he would run well but said he had bled recently. No surprise if he bled when hitting the last here.

Colin's Sister (16:05 Cheltenham)

24th October 2015 - Cheltenham - She was hard driven to go past beaten horses in the straight and stayed on strongly up the hill well in arrears of the front three.