

“Racing Pub of the Year”

The Plough Inn
Ford, Temple Guiting
Cheltenham Glos GL54 5RU

Media coverage pack

Tel: 01386 584215

Pack created by Jan Barley



Craig Brown - Contender for the John Smith's People Race 2009



The Southern Contenders for the John Smith's People Race 2009

Racing Pub of the Year 2009



12th November 2008 - Racing Post - Peter Scargill

RAISE A GLASS TO THE FINALISTS

Last years winner The Engineer is keen to make a successful defence of its title as Racing Pub of the Year after making the shortlist in the 2008 competition, run in conjunction with Racing UK and The Publican magazine.

The Brighton pub is one of the five regional winners, along with The Yard in Newmarket, The Red Lion in Wetherby, The Plough Inn near Cheltenham and Dan Linehan's Bar in Killarney. The five pubs were chosen for showing dedication and passion for horseracing, which included organising race-days, syndicates and charity fundraisers.

Phil Reeves of The Engineer said: " Horse-racing forms the heart of our pub, so everyone is delighted that we are defending our title."

The regional win for The Plough Inn at Ford, near Cheltenham, comes in time for this weekends Open meeting and race-goers are being welcomed to join the celebrations. The pub's Craig Brown said: "We are really happy and completely surprised. Thanks to all our customers who nominated us and we hope that everyone will come and celebrate with us this weekend."

The Yard in Newmarket is a popular venue for the racing fraternity, and the pubs Sheila Watts described it as "an honour to receive this award."

The award for Ireland's racing pub was particularly pleasing for the regulars at Linehans Bar, who are described as "racing mad" by the bars Hannah Linehan. And Jackie Holmes of ^he Red Lion in Wetherby is hoping that this is the first of many racing related successes for the pub. "This is fantastic, we're so pleased. We love having everyone in here for the racing and we're looking forward to watching our syndicate horse Dancer's Serenade," she said.

Each of the regional finalists will win a day out at the races for 12 regulars and has been short listed for the overall Racing Pub of the Year 2008 award, which will be announced at the end of the month

19th November 2008 - Gloucestershire Echo

PLOUGH RACES TO PUB GLORY

The Plough Inn at Ford isn't only celebrating local jockey Paddy Brennan taking the Paddy Power Gold Cup at Cheltenham

It's also taken the title of regional winner for the coveted title of Racing Pub of the Year.

The hostelry, next door to Jonjo O'Neill's stable, has clinched the trophy for Wales and West and is in the final furlong for the national title, pitted against six other runners.

The contest is run by TV's Racing UK and publications The Publican and The Racing Post. Plough landlord Craig Brown, who lays on a marquee for 400 racing enthusiasts at Cheltenham every November and March, said the overall atmosphere could see the pub romp home to victory.

"Race days are always absolutely buzzing," he said "We start off with a carvery breakfast for race goers, then lay on a big screen so the local people not at the races and stable hands can watch and have some lunch. Then race-goers come back for live entertainment, a three piece band every night, and a chance to meet friends, local jockeys and trainers. My partner Rebecca and the staff are inspirational and work like Trojans.

We do cater for the general public, not just race-goers, but they're encouraged to enter into and enjoy the racing spirit."

Craig has pulled in a racing crowd for seven years at the 500 -year-old pub and restaurant.

8th December 2008 - The Publican

FIRST PAST THE POST

The Plough Inn at Ford, near Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, has been named as the Racing Pub of the Year for 2008.

Judges, who included representatives from organisers Racing UK, the Racing Post and The Publican, named the pub as the overall winner of the competition in recognition of the way it uses racing to maximise its business.

The pub, near Cheltenham racecourse, is a well known haven for the local horse racing community, giving stable hands a discount on food and drink and regularly organising darts contests with local jockeys.

Licensee Craig Brown said he was "Gobsmacked" to win the award. 'It's already bringing new customers in,' he added

10th January 2009 - Gloucestershire Echo
Racing Editor Jonathon Herbert

EXPERTS BACKING BROWN FOR AINTREE

Aintree hopeful Craig Brown is receiving support from experts in his bid to enjoy the opportunity of a lifetime. Warren Marston, Robert Thornton and Martin Keighley are among the racing personalities backing his efforts to ride in the 2009 People's race in front of 70,000 spectators on John Smith's Grand National day.

The 34 year old landlord of the Plough Inn at Ford - winner of the Racing Pub Of the Year Award - hopes to be among the 10 members of the public chosen to take part.

Brown, who joined the Household Cavalry after leaving school, has received plenty of encouragement from friends, locals and pub regulars. "Choc (Thornton) said go for it because it sounds like a good laugh, and Martin Keighley's wife Belinda entered me for it," said Brown.

"I've been riding out at Martin's with Warren Marston and he said I should ride out as much as I can and he would have me ready for it. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, and if I'm chosen it would be fantastic for the pub, the community and my family. Its good fun for everybody.

I know the winner of last year's race, Clare Twemlow, and she said it was the best thing she'd ever done in her life."

He said his partner Rebecca, with whom he has a five year old daughter Lilybelle, had been a massive help by doing extra work in the pub so he could focus on trying to qualify for the race.

After making it to the last 32 entries Brown, whose chosen charity is the Air Ambulance, faces an assessment of his fitness and riding skills at the British Riding School at Newmarket next Saturday. Sixteen of the entries will then go forward to the next stage, which includes training at a top stable, before the final field is whittled down to the 10 who will compete on April 4.

Jockey turned trainer Keighley said Brown rode well enough to take part in the charity race, 'without a doubt he's good enough but the big thing is fitness because you need to be fit to ride in any race' he said. 'its surprising how fit you need to be and people don't realise it until they do it.'

12th January 2009 - The Publican

SPORT OF KINGS

The Plough Inn at Ford, near Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, has been studying the form and found that the going is good. Licensee Craig Brown has become a master at packing in customers to watch televised races.

With its location close to one of the best known racecourses in England, it is not surprising that the pub, which won the title of Racing Pub of the Year 2008 from Racing UK, Racing Post and The Publican, attracts a racing crowd. From visiting race-goers making use of the pubs B & B facilities to locals and stable hands who are unable to attend the races packing out the pub to watch proceedings on its big screen, the pub caters for them all.

But, although being close to Cheltenham is an obvious perk, Craig says that he has had to work hard to pull in the custom to watch the races on his big screens. "We started here in 2002 and the pub was on the map racing wise at that point. But we have got bigger and bigger. We started off with a 20ft marquee in the garden and we're now up to 130ft in the Gold Cup week. Having the marquees and what we do really drags them in," he says.

On the days of big racing meets, Brown erects a **heated marquee** in the **grounds of the pub**. The marquee is fitted out with a **bar, carvery service** and several large screens. All meals from breakfast to a late dinner are served in the marquee.

5th February 2009 - The Times - Alan Lee - Diary

Emerging local talent raises the bar for McCoy

Tony McCoy has a lot on his mind right now. The weather has been keeping him in purgatory on the brink of 3,000 winners and novelty-bet punters are permanently backing him to ride Denman in the Gold Cup. Just to add to his distractions, Diary can reveal he has a rival - there is a new jockey on the books of McCoy's principal trainer, Jonjo O'Neill.

No ordinary jockey, this. Indeed, while McCoy performs his ritual self-torture by refusing dinner and taking scorching baths to lose that extra pound, Craig Brown is pulling pints, serving meals and supervising what is officially the best racing pub in the land.

It helps that his hostelry, The Plough at Ford, looks directly on to O'Neill's gallops at Jackdaws Castle, for that is where he has been assigned to complete his training for the John Smith's People's Race. Brown, who was entered by Belinda Keighley - wife of the trainer, Martin - is already into the last 16 and will find out next month if he has made the field of ten to ride at Aintree on Grand National day.

His schedule is daunting. "I'm riding two lots at Jonjo's, then running the pub the rest of the day, often not getting to bed until 1am. I hadn't ridden much before, so I'm aching all over but I'm aware the real hard work is still to come." Brown said.

He has been landlord of The Plough - elected the best for racing folk by Racing Post readers - for seven years and is planning the latest extension to his marquee for the Cheltenham Festival. "It was 20 square foot in our first year and its now up to 110," he said.

The pubs clientele means he is getting plenty of advice. "Robert Thornton and Warren Marston are regulars and good friends." Brown said. "They're both being very supportive." McCoy will doubtless add his advice - especially if he finally lands the 3,000 at Huntingdon today.

7th February 2009 - Daily Mirror - Anne Gripper

CHEERS! PUBLICAN CRAIG HAS A THIRST FOR SUCCESS

Jonjo O'Neill has got a new training charge at his Jackdaws Castle yard - and this one is set to bring rewards of beer rather than cash.

The Cheltenham based trainer has agreed to take on Jon Smith's People's Race hopeful Craig Brown, 34 from Cheltenham, and prepare him for the £100,000 charity flat race on Grand National day.

O'Neill is already familiar with Craig since he runs the local pub, the Plough Inn at Ford, and is going to do everything to make sure his man makes it to the Aintree starting line - particularly given the party potential if Craig can become People's Race champion on April 4.

O'Neill said, "I've known Craig ever since he's been at the Plough. It's a great pub - walk about 10 yards and over a wall and I'm there. Craig's a complete lunatic - he would have to be! He's grand. I didn't know he rode so well. He's been up here a few times this week and drove through a couple of feet of snow. He's fit already plus he's very dedicated, very keen. Whatever he does he will do it right, he's that kind of lad. He will be ready no problem and we will get him as fit as we can. Everyone wants him to do well - and if he wins it will surely be free drinks in the Plough for a month!"

All 16 no nonsense novices still in the running to be one of the 10 John Smith's jockeys to race at Aintree have been paired up with professional yards and started riding out. O'Neill is one of the 12 trainers new to the John Smith's People's Race challenge, now in its third year. And fellow rookie Nicky Henderson, guiding 26 year old Newbury racecourse sponsorship exec Caroline Fleming is also hoping to land a debut win.

"Caroline rides very well, there's something to work with," said Henderson. "I like the idea of the People's Race - it will be great fun and I hope it will

be for her to. And if we're going to help her we want her to win the race, simple as that! We're not in the business of having runners and riders in a race who don't stand a chance at winning."

Jonathan Geake, who trained the first People's Race champion Kevin Old, returns after missing last year, as does Don McCain. And while Lucinda Russell is back for more after last year's experience, Richard Ford is the only trainer to have taken on a John Smith's novice every year. His previous jockeys Lisa Rodgers and Amanda Craven both made the final 10, coming 6th and 4th respectively, so this year's apprentice, Manchester based sales manager Michelle Baldwin, 35, has a lot to live up to.

Ford says, "Being involved with the People's Race the last two years has been tremendous fun. We've been fortunate to have had two very dedicated and committed ladies. Michelle has a lot to live up to a fair old mountain to climb - but I've met her once, and she seems very keen and I have no worries. We've got 100 per cent record of getting our jockeys into the race and will do our best to keep that up. Carrie and I both know what it's like to ride around that Aintree track and Michelle will have all the help we can give her."

8th February 2009 - Racing Post

Would-be-jocks get top tutors for People's Race

Four of the biggest names in jump racing will provide tutoring to the would-be jockeys who will be taking part in this year's John Smith's people's Race at Aintree on Grand National day, writes *Paul Eacott*.

Nicky Henderson, Howard Johnson, Alan King and Jonjo O'Neill are among the ten trainers who will be giving coaching to the 16-hopefuls riding out regularly in the build-up to their big day on April 4.

Craig Brown, licensee of The Plough Inn at Ford, Cheltenham, has already impressed two time champion jockey O'Neill with his ability in the saddle. O'Neill said: 'we are delighted to have Craig come along to train with us, as he's a very capable rider and displays all the skills and determination necessary to be a success. If he continues to put in the hard work, he has every chance of being one of the ten riders on the starting line at Aintree.

The riders will return later this month to the Racing Colleges at Doncaster and Newmarket, where they will benefit from the knowledge of Grand National winning jockey Mick Fitzgerald, who has signed up as one of the team of coaches this year.

The final decision on which ten riders will progress to Aintree on Grand National day will be made on March 22.

16th February 2009 - The Publican

A horse racing- mad licensee who is used to watching the sport on TV could end up riding in front of a huge crowd on Grand National day. Craig Brown, licensee of the Plough Inn at Ford, Cheltenham - The Publican's Racing Pub of the Year - has been chosen to train for the 2009 John Smith's People's Race.

He will join 15 other novice jockeys at a training camp that will eventually see 10 amateurs compete in the event at Aintree on April 4, with the winner picking up 50,000 for charity.

Craig, who is working with leading trainer Jonjo O'Neill, said: 'I'm working really hard to try and get myself to Aintree as it would be a fantastic personal experience and, of course, my chosen charity will benefit from some much needed funds.' The final decision on which riders will progress to Aintree will be made on March 24.