



WETHERBY
RACECOURSE & CONFERENCE CENTRE

For immediate release

12 March 2007

'IRISH DAY' SATURDAY AT WETHERBY

Irish-trained horses and their connections will be competing for the major prizes at this week's Cheltenham Festival which ends on Friday – and the Emerald Isle theme continues with Wetherby's 'Irish Day' Meeting this coming Saturday (March 17) – St. Patrick's Day.

The racing programme is scheduled to start at 2-35 p.m. and there's a free half pint of Guinness available to the first 100 racegoers through the 'Irish' marquee in the Paddock Enclosure from when the gates open two hours before the first race. Irish Band 'Ceilidh House', along with three traditional Irish Dancers provide the musical entertainment in the marquee in which Irish food and drink will be served. The giant totesport screen situated opposite the main stands will enable racegoers to follow even more of the action.

The feature race is The Belfair Handicap Chase, a £14,000 contest for stayers over three miles and one furlong, supported by the leading sports betting exchange company

The opening race is the 'Lord Rimmer' Memorial Maiden Hurdle over two miles, named in memory of a former Wetherby resident and racing enthusiast, David Rimmer, who passed away in January 2005. For several years, David had a racing and sporting memorabilia stand at most meetings at Wetherby. It's the second time a race has been held in his memory.

The Ian Hutchinson Memorial Challenge Cup, a Handicap Hurdle contest over two miles, is once again supported by the Hutchinson family from Bolton, while The John Carbert 60th Birthday Celebrations Handicap Hurdle over the extended two and a half miles is part of the special birthday celebrations of a local racegoer.

With just five days' remaining of Wetherby's Jumping season (which concludes with the annual 'Ladies Evening' on May 10), the Wetherby Trainers' Challenge - now in its third term offering bonuses totalling £10,000 for trainers and stable staff depending upon winners and placed horses throughout the campaign - is headed by last season's winner, County Durham-based trainer, Howard Johnson, with 479 points, pursued by the inaugural winner of this award, Sue Smith on 221 points. There's a close battle for the Smaller Yard Bonus (for trainers with 25 or less horses in their stable according to the official January returns), with Micky Hammond leading the way from Harry Hogarth, Bob Johnson and Jimmy Moffatt.

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