



BANGOR-ON-DEE
RACECOURSE

**CELEBRATING 160 YEARS
OF RACING AT
BANGOR-ON-DEE**

1859-2019

BANGOR-ON-DEE'S FIRST RACE

On the 25 February 1859, the first Steeplechase meeting was held at Bangor Is-y-Coed over the same course on which the races are held today.

The main event on that very first card was the Grand Wynnstay Steeplechase and was organised to settle a wager between Lloyd Kenyon of Gredington, and Richard Myddelton of Chirk Castle.

The race was started by Mr Campbell and attracted 12 runners who ran over a distance of about three miles.

A six-year-old named Charley, owned by a Mr. Jones, and ridden by a jockey named Gaff won the race. Since this date, racing took place regularly except during the wars.

GAMECOCK WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning at Bangor-on-Dee.

A POEM WAS WRITTEN ABOUT BANGOR-ON-DEE RACECOURSE AND SOLD AT THE PRICE OF ONE SHILLING FOR CHARITY

It was originally documented that: "The Proceeds from the Sale of these lines will be given to Market Drayton Dispensary, which is in need of Funds to carry on its useful work."

Bangor Steeplechases, 1887.

I hate your Flat-racing, give me Steeple-chasing,
And Bangor's the scene of my lay,
Where the meadows so sound are the very best ground
For the sport we're enjoying to-day.
The crowds that are seen are far greater I ween
Than ever were seen here before ;
And the card it is longer, the entries are stronger,
The starters are better and more ;
The Sweepstakes attractive, the managers active,
The bright charming morn are the cause.
We'll enjoy the great treat, our luncheon we'll eat,
It tastes best of all out of doors.
They have come from Welsh Wales, with its mountains and vales,
They have come from the country around ;
In thousands "the Masses" enjoy with "the Classes"
The fun that is here to be found.
There is one from North Wales my Muse always assails,
He is not here, thank goodness it's so ;
If a Patriot you be, read Jennings, M.P.,
And quote him wherever you go.
Wynnstay has a party, its popular Bart. he
Is known as a patron of sport,
And Combermere's Lord, by Cheshire adored,
His experience as Steward has brought.
There is Sal from the Mere he, looks happy and cheery,
And the Squire from Bryn-y-pys Hall,
And Archie from Gerwyn, and Best from the Berwyn,
With Welshers I cannot re-call.
Next the Kafir I see, and Whitmore from King's Lee,
Owen John from the famed Bara Chaws ;
There's Bobby from Cefn, to whom Bangor's a Heaven,
He can ride and sit still as a mouse.
Tho' Allthrey is left of its tenant bereft,
The old bird and the Cygnets are here,
He has found a new nest, with a mate of the best,
And has come to enjoy the good cheer.
From Mossfields comes Jack, when hounds run you may back
Him to follow as straight as a whip.
Though a carriage he's brought full, A. Darby looks thoughtful
Lest his pedigree chicks have the pip.
From Cholmondeley comes Rock, with of course Arthur Brock,

1859 1868 1887 1889 1893

FRED ARCHER RIDES A WINNER

For the first 20 years of racing at Bangor there was an annual event for ponies under 14 hands, run over two miles of the steeplechase course.

In 1868 this race was won by a pony called Maid of Trent, and owned by MG Willins. The successful jockey was a boy aged 12, weighing out at an incredible 4st. 11 lbs, Fred Archer.

The young jockeys first recorded ever win under rules, later became one of the greatest jockeys of all time, riding a total of 8,084 races, winning 2,748 of them.



Fred Archer

CLOISTER WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning at Bangor-on-Dee.

FRED HASSELL RIDES FIVE WINNERS IN ONE MEETING

A record for Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse that still stands today.

The winning horses were:

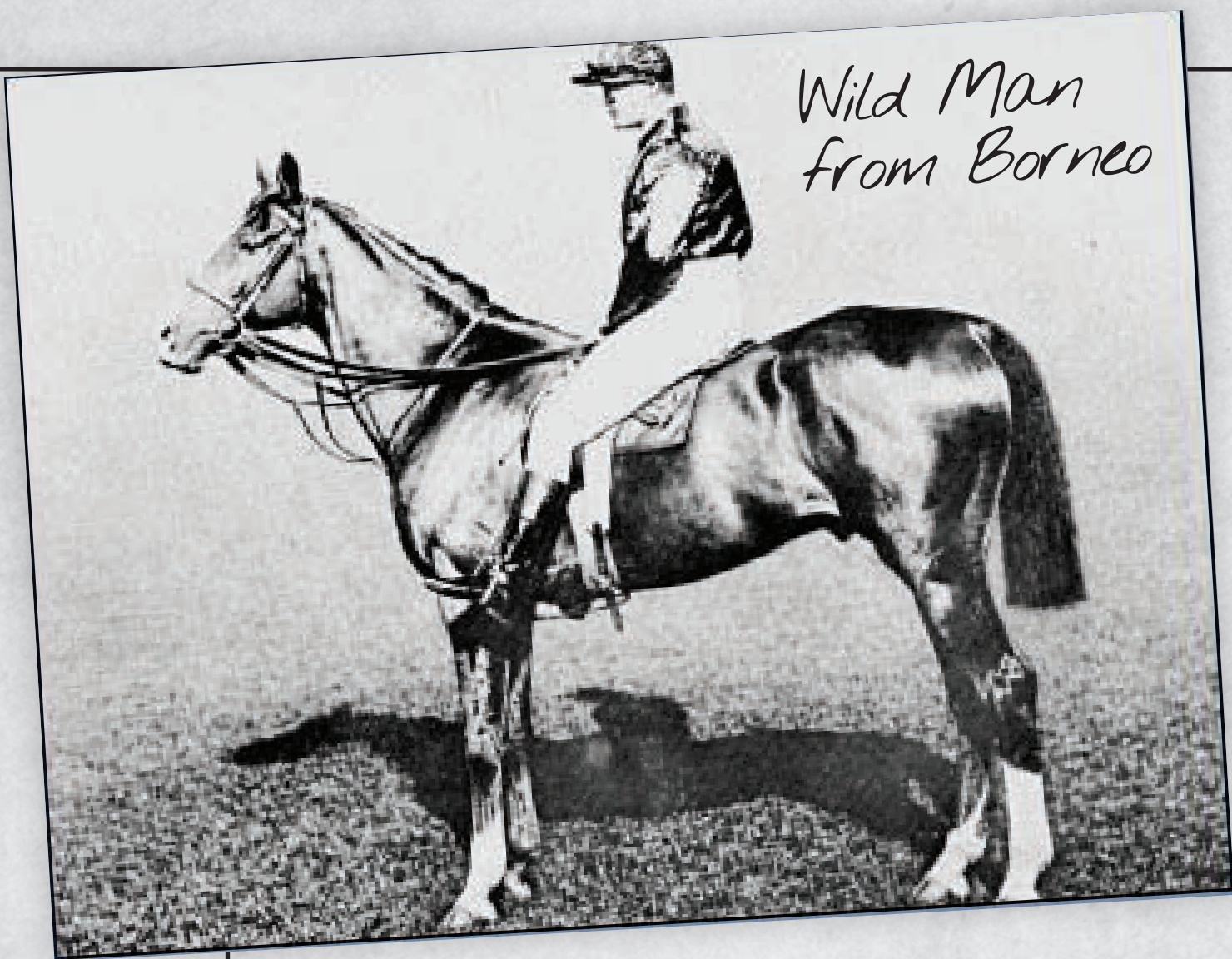
- Miss Palmer
- Bagman
- Candytuft
- Curiosity
- Sweet Ethel



Cloister



Mr Campbell



Wild Man
from Borneo

WILD MAN FROM BORNEO WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning at Bangor-on-Dee in 1893.



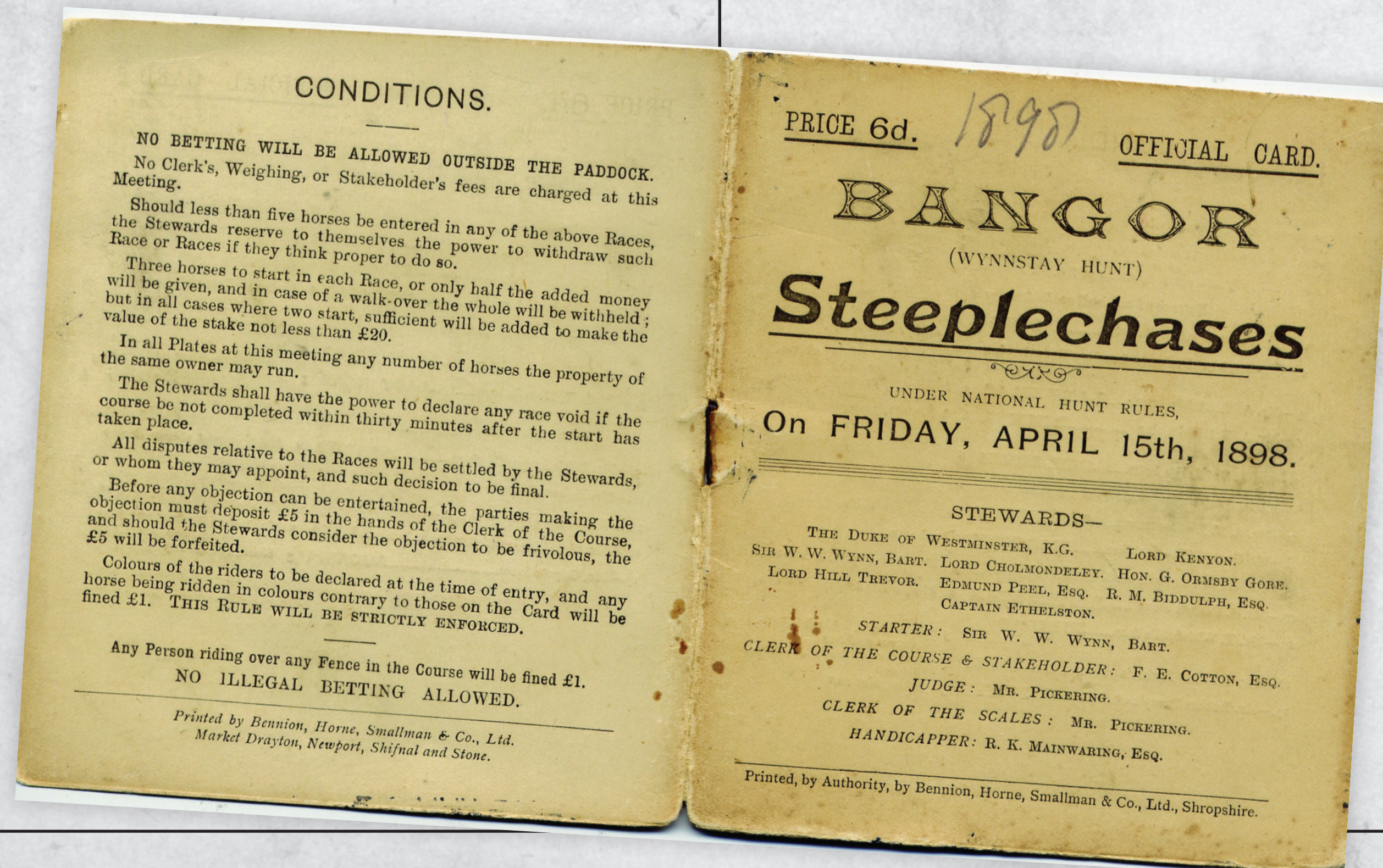
Mr. A. Davies riding Forbear (Winner) & Mr. W. Barker riding Chance (2nd) 1901

MR DAVIES RIDING FORBEAR WINS THE GRAND WYNNSTAY STEEPLECHASE

RACING IS CANCELLED DUE TO FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

Although Bangor-on-Dee races were not held, some one rang the bell at the racecourse on the day originally fixed at two o'clock, the starting time of the opening steeplechase.

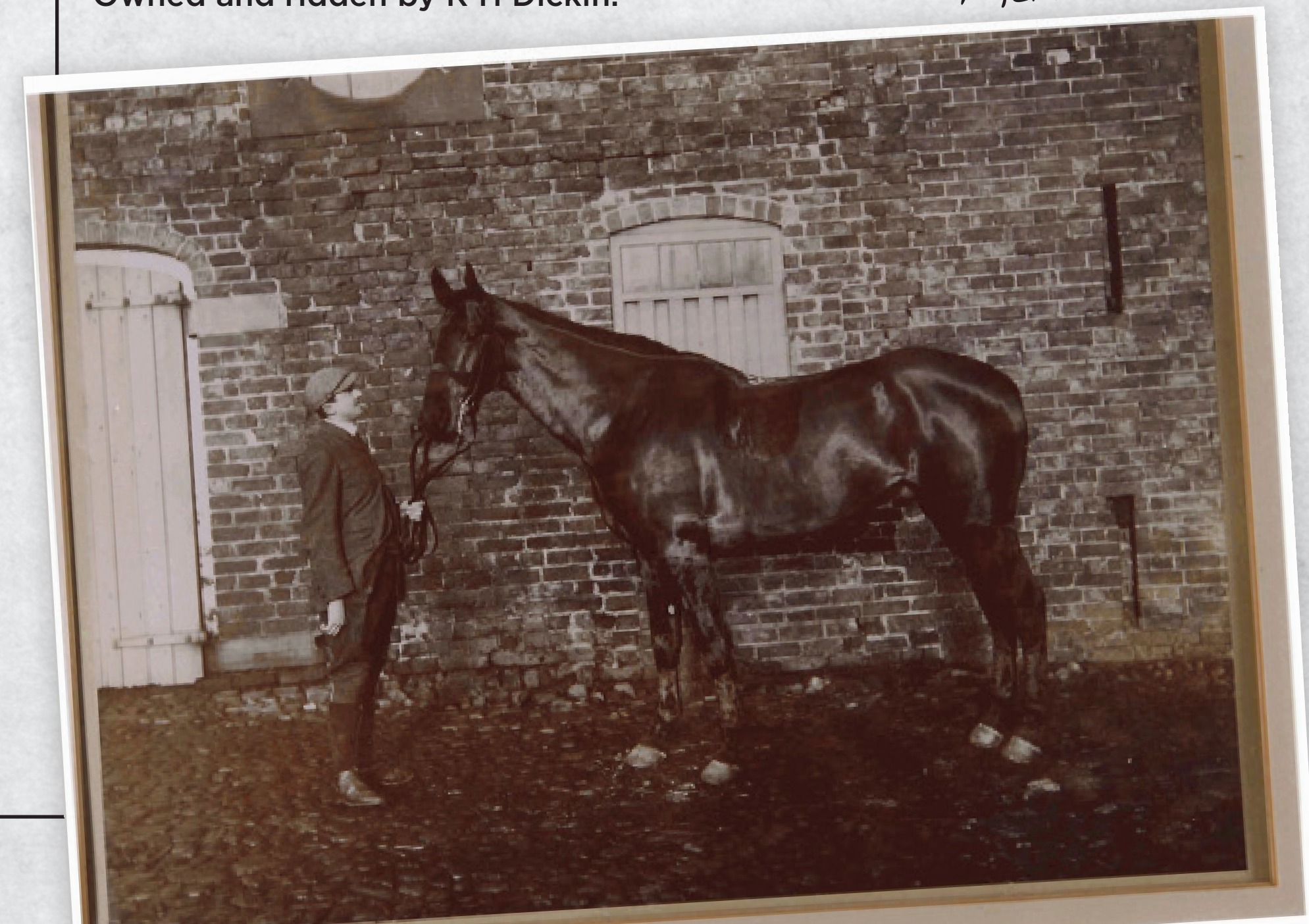
1895 1898 1901 1905 1924



MERRIMAN II WINS THE GRAND WYNNSTAY STEEPLECHASE

Owned and ridden by R H Dickin.

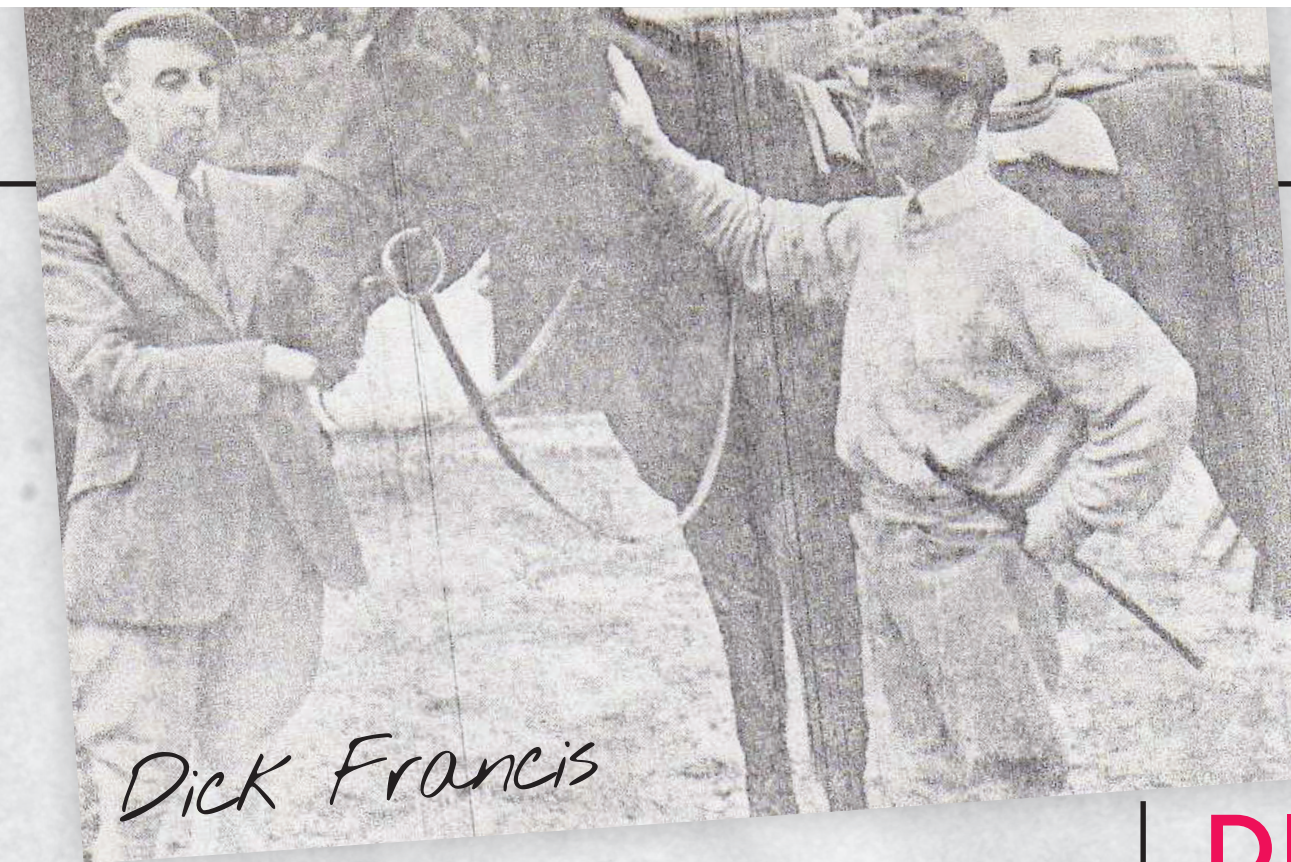
Merriman II





THE ORIGINAL WEIGHING ROOM WAS BUILT

April 5th 1929. For the first time in the history of the Course a charge was made for admission. Racegoers grumbled at being asked to pay Two shillings for a privilege they had previously enjoyed without charge.



FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE COURSE CHARGED RACEGOERS FOR ADMISSION

DICK FRANCIS RODE AT BANGOR-ON-DEE IN HIS FIRST RACE UNDER THE RULES

The former National Hunt Jockey turned thriller writer, was unplaced, but loved every minute of the experience and afterwards wrote to every racehorse trainer he or his father had ever met to beg for a job as an amateur jockey.

He rode the first of 345 winners at Bangor-on-Dee, Wrenbury Tiger, on May 3rd 1947, winning by more than 200 yards, and also had his first treble at the course, when he rode three winners on the same day.

When asked his opinion of the Bangor course, he replied: as a matter of fact it is my favourite because of the flatness and the absence of sharp bends.

1927 1928 1929 1946 1947

SIR NOEL MURLESS RIDES A WINNER IN THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously finishing third in his first ever race at Bangor-on-Dee on Mr WH Midwood's Zain in the Bryn y Pys Chase.

The classic winning trainer Sir Noel Murless, acknowledged as one of the greatest flat trainers of all time, was beaten by a length and a half by Mr Patterson's Upton Lord, who was ridden by Chester solicitor Billy Dutton.

The jockey went on to win the Grand National the same year, on the 100-1 outsider Tipperary Tim, who was trained locally at Whitchurch by Joe Dodd.

TWO MEETINGS WERE HELD AT BANGOR IN THE SPRING, AND HURDLE COURSE WAS CONSTRUCTED

It was hoped that the improvements would attract more entries and better class of horse. The two meetings held in proved to be a great success.

RECORD ATTENDANCE

Ideal summer weather on March 30 1946 saw a record crowd of 11,000 welcome the return of racing to Bangor.

March 30th 1946 - ideal summer weather - a record crowd of 11,000 welcomed the return of racing to Bangor after an enforced break of several years - a refreshing change after the restrictions of the war years.

AFTER ALMOST 12 MONTHS OFF, RACING GETS UNDERWAY AT BANGOR AGAIN

During the closure, about £15,000 was spent on enclosing the track. The racecourse drainage system continued to be worked on along with the levelling off the track in making Bangor-on-Dee one of the best tracks of its kind in the country.

A PHOTO FINISH

The Bangor executive installs a camera so that the judge can inspect a photograph of the finish if he thinks it necessary.

DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS PERSON IS?

Now the General Manager of the course, Jeannie Chantler handles Charlie Fox owned and trained by Tony Brassey.



1972 1973 1974 1970s 1976

RECORD ATTENDANCE

One of the largest attendances was recorded since the war at nearly 7,000 people out to witness excellent racing at Bangor-on-Dee despite the uncertain weather.

The feature event, the sponsored Wingett and Son Auctioneers Handicap Chase was won by Lord Shrewsbury's Monaco Tan trained by George Owen at Tiverton, Tarporley, and ridden by Reg Crank.

THE BBC COVER THE OCTOBER MEETING

The BBC cover the October meeting at Bangor-on-Dee, live from the course.

The famous commentator, Sir Peter O'Sullivan said in commentary: 'They have just passed the stands at Bangor with a full circuit to go', before correcting himself in the same breath by announcing there are no stands at Bangor.

Sir Peter O'Sullivan



SETTING THE SCENE FOR GRANADA'S SHERLOCK HOLMES

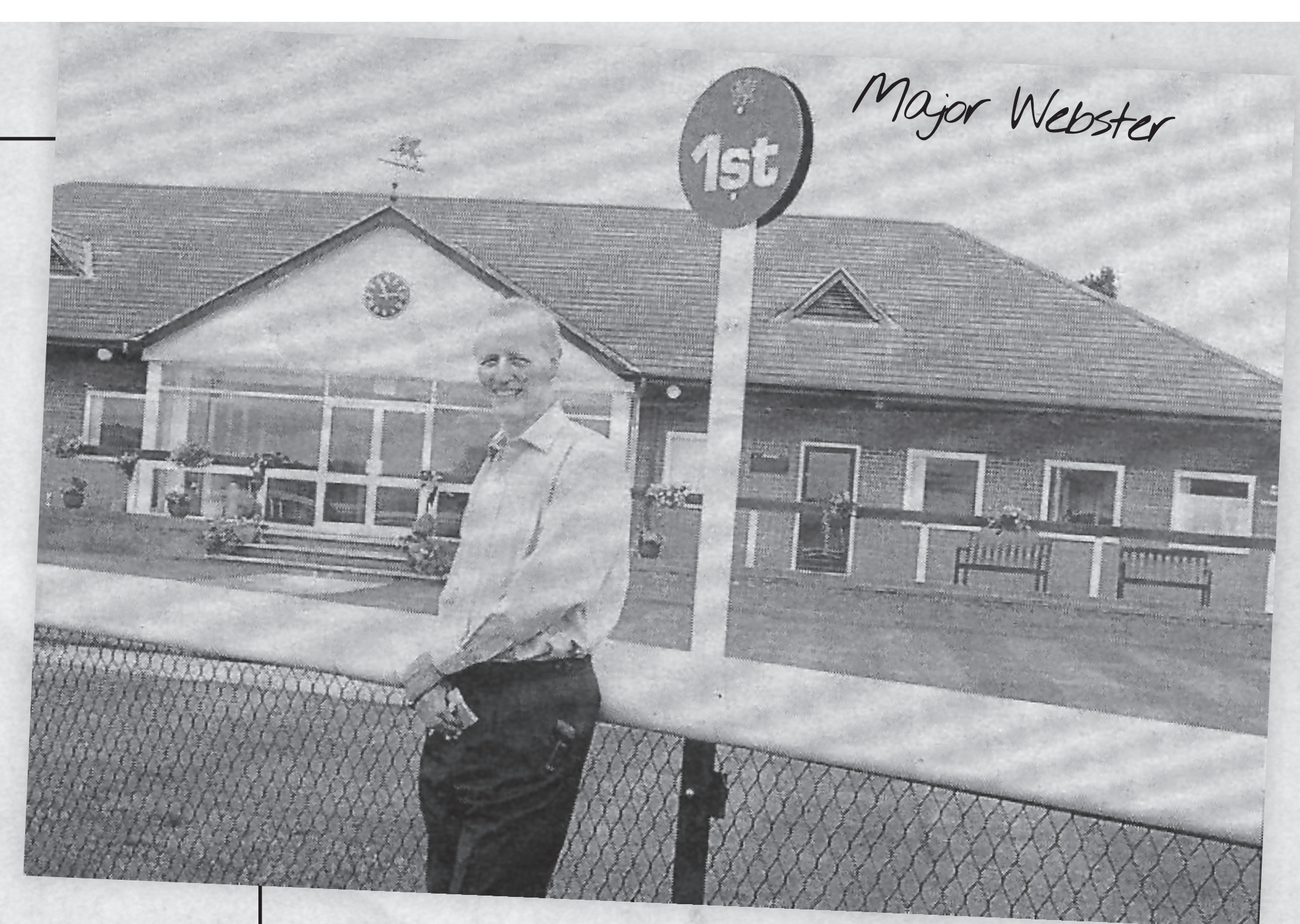
Not having a stand at Bangor-on-Dee stood the course in good stead in the early 1980's when Granada Television filmed an episode of Sherlock Holmes called Silver Blaze.

It was a story based on the favourite for the Dartmoor Cup, the horse having been kidnapped prior to the race. Sherlock Holmes was played by the late Jeremy Brett.

NORTONS COIN WINS THE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

Previously winning a Handicap Chase on 8 March 1989 at Bangor-on-Dee.

MAJOR WEBSTER STARTS AS CLERK OF THE COURSE AND RACECOURSE MANAGER



1980s 1988 1990 1995 1996

FIRST BRICK BUILDING ON MAIN SITE

Beginning of the replacing of all the old wooden war time huts.

COULDN'T BE BETTER WINS THE HENNESSY GOLD CUP

Previously winning a Handicap Chase on 28 October 1994 at Bangor-on-Dee.





CURRENT MANAGER, JEANNIE CHANTLER STARTS WORKING AT BANGOR-ON-DEE

JOHN MALAM RETIRES AS HEAD GROUNDSMAN

Andrew Malam, took over the reins from his father, John who retired after 27 years in charge. Andrew now works alongside his brother Brian and other ground staff all hailing from the neighbouring village of Overton.

ANZUM WINS THE CHELTENHAM STAYERS' HURDLE

Previously winning a Juvenile Novices' Hurdle 28 October 1994 at Bangor-on-Dee.

WYNNSTAY BUILDING EXTENDED TO CURRENT SIZE

THE RACECOURSE SPENDS £850,000 ON UPDATING FACILITIES

Developments included a owners and trainers bar and a hospitality function room with capacity for 150.

The Tote will be building a new betting shop next to the new turnstile and toilet block building, and there will be additional space in the paddock - lawns in front of the weighing room complex and the winners enclosure has now moved into the paddock. The new saddling box complex and horse walkway, is now adjacent to the parade ring

The Nicolson Building, housing Owners and Trainers Bar and the Paddock Restaurant is opened by Mrs Malise Nicolson, widow of the longstanding Chairman Major Malise Nicolson.

Major Nicolson was instrumental in the growth of Bangor-on-Dee Races, and implemented the building of the first brick building in 1988!

1997 1999 2000 2001

MR MULLIGAN WINS THE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

Previously winning a Novices' Chase 24 November 1995 at Bangor-on-Dee.

THE CURRENT WEIGHING ROOM BUILDING INCORPORATING OFFICES AND THE MEDICAL ROOM WAS BUILT



John Parrot

RACING RETURNS AT LONG LAST TO BANGOR-ON-DEE

SOFT GROUND

The floods which struck all over Britain during Autumn 2000, sank the course beneath a lake, leaving the going more than a little soft! When the River Dee burst its banks, it took with it a complete steeplechase fence and several sets of plastic wings.

JOHN PARROTT VISITS BANGOR-ON-DEE RACECOURSE AND HAS CONTINUED TO VISIT SINCE





CHESTER RACE
COMPANY LTD.

BANGOR-ON-DEE IS BOUGHT BY CHESTER RACE COMPANY

The £2.5 million deal had the backing of all Bangor directors not connected with Chester, as they believed it would head off unwelcome predators, to maintain Bangor's 'distinctive nature' and to strengthen the jump course's commercial position prior to the race. Sherlock Holmes was played by the late Jeremy Brett.

IRIS'S GIFT WINS CHELTENHAM STAYERS' HURDLE

Previously winning a Novices' Hurdle on 12 October 2002 at Bangor-on-Dee.



Iris's Gift

AMBERLEIGH HOUSE WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning a Handicap chase in April 2002 at Bangor-on-Dee.



Amberleigh House

2002 2003 2004 2005

NICOLSON BUILDING INCORPORATING PADDOCK RESTAURANT AND CURRENT MEMBERS CLUB BUILT



PETER DICKIN, THE GRANDSON OF ROBERT DICKIN, COMMEMORATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS GRANDFATHER'S VICTORY

Peter Dickin, the Grandson of Robert Dickin, who won the 1905 Grand Wynnstey Steeplechase on Merriman II, commemorates the 100th anniversary of his Grandfather's victory by sponsoring a race at Bangor-on-Dee.

HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S BUNGALOW IN STABLE YARD BUILT

HOSTED THE FIRST AMATEUR POINT-TO-POINT RACES RUN BY LOCAL HUNTS

The course for the Point-to-Point is on the inside of the main track and races are run right handed.

THE FIRST ANNUAL ANNE DUCHESS OF WESTMINSTER'S MEMORIAL HANDICAP STEEPLE CHASE AT BANGOR-ON-DEE

The first Anne Duchess of Westminster Charity Day is held. The Duchess who owned Arkle, was a great steeple chasing fan, and regularly attended the fixtures at Bangor-on-Dee. After her death, the trustees of her charity arranged for a Memorial Race to be held at Bangor during November, due to her love of autumn steeple chasing.

My Way De Solzen



MY WAY DE SOLZEN WINS THE CHELTENHAM ARKLE

Previously winning a Novices' Hurdle on 15 December 2004 at Bangor-on-Dee.

HORSERADISH

THE CATERING & EVENT CREATIVES

HORSERADISH CATERING TAKE-OVER ALL ON-SITE CATERING AND HOSPITALITY

2006

2007

2008

2009

WATER JUMP WAS REMOVED

The water jump was removed because its position meant that the full width of the track could not be used.



Comply or Die



DENMAN WINS THE CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

Previously winning a Novice Hurdle in February 2008 at Bangor-on-Dee.

COMPLY OR DIE WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning a Novice Chase in February 2008 at Bangor-on-Dee.

Denman





Peddlers Cross



PEDDLERS CROSS WINS THE NEPTUNE NOVICE'S HURDLE 2010 CHELTENHAM

Previously winning a Novices' Hurdle on 16 December 2009 at Bangor-on-Dee.

HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL VISITS THE RACECOURSE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Since, the Princess has visited in 2013, 2015 and 2017 as a guest of the nominated charity on Anne Duchess of Westminster's Charity Day.

Bangor Bet

BANGOR BET INTRODUCED

All former Tote betting positions were replaced by the racecourse's own in-house Bangor Bet betting system, making Bangor-on-Dee the first racecourse in 80 years to run without the tote.

2010

2011

2012

2013



Ballabriggs

BALLABRIGGS WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL

Previously winning a Beginners' Chase on 29 March 2008 at Bangor-on-Dee.

CARRUTHERS WINS THE HENNESSY GOLD CUP

Previously winning a Novices' Hurdle on 8 February 2008 at Bangor-on-Dee.



Carruthers

BANGOR-ON-DEE HOSTS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE UK, THE TBA FOAL SHOW

Thoroughbred Breeders' Association.



BANGOR-ON-DEE UPDATE THEIR BRANDING



BANGOR-ON-DEE
RACECOURSE

2014



BANGOR-ON-DEE WINS ROA SMALL RACECOURSE OF THE YEAR OUTRIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME

Following the joint sharing of the accolade in 2017,
Bangor wins the award outright.

2017

2018

A NEW OWNERS AND TRAINERS FACILITY

Since opening in 2017, the facility has recieved regular positive acclaim. Visiting trainer Kim Bailey shared his experience: "Bangor on Saturday was special. I would challenge any racecourse outside a grade one to do better."





A NEW BROADCASTING DEAL WITH SKY SPORTS RACING

A ten-year deal with Sky Sports Racing will bring live racing from Bangor-on-Dee to the screens of Sky customers from March 2019 onwards.

2019

Our story continues...