

Bangor Graces Punchestown Races

Monday's here, we mustn't sleep late
We're off to Ireland and just can't wait
Donned our best, fastened our laces
It's Bangor's trip to Punchestown Races

A ferry crossing, a short drive west
Gets us there, relaxed and unstressed
We could not stay at a better place
Than Lawlors Hotel in the centre of Naas
Convenient space for your car to park
A friendly smile from reception clerk
Staff that greet you with happy faces
Help, if needed, with your cases
First class food at breakfast and dinner
Not a chance you'll go home thinner
One bed each (in case you're not pally!)
In a room the length of a bowling alley

When everyone's freshened from ferry or flight
We're meeting downstairs on our first night
For Prosecco and plans of what's in store
Knowing Jeannie will see it's all Top Drawer!
Then following on from her brief agenda
The younger guys can get out on a bender!

A drink after dinner to finish the night
Then up next morning at first light
There's bacon & eggs or whatever you fancy
Then onto the coach - courtesy Tom Clancy
This bus has no shortage of wear and tear
With seats it borrowed from Ryanair
I'm sitting beneath a drip on my head
It's a Benny Hill version of a mobile shed

A comfort break's welcome for those a bit older
When we breakdown on the hard shoulder
Our willing driver - give him his due
Telephones base for a coach brand new
It duly arrives and we pile on board
And Mullins yard we head toward

The new version has a swaying motion
Like rowing a boat across the Ocean
But at last our journey proves worthwhile
As Willie welcomes us with a smile
Slightly surprised by the size of our group
Though Jeannie had kept him in the loop



She reminds him that he must have failed
To read the notes that she emailed

The problems of the transport fleet
Are now behind us - time for a treat!
As eyes are met with this fine scene
Fifty plus horses - a sight to be seen
An impressive set up, there is no

doubt
As the second lot is riding out
And when their session is over and done
Willie asks each rider how the horse has run
Ruby is in the watching crowd
Jeannie, as ever, has done us proud

Jo shows us round to where horses are stabled
Each one in its home that's clearly labelled
Impressive performers behind each door



The place is bulging with stars galore
Willie has trained a lot more winners
Than most of us have had hot dinners
We stand in awe of this modest man
As Anthony tells me he's his biggest fan



Eric's leapt over a great muddy ditch
To meet his winner of the Cesarewitch
Stratum, the horse his money was on
That duly delivered at 25 to 1!

To visit here has been a no brainer
A chance to meet Cheltenham's top trainer
But from Mullins yard, it's back to base
Quick change, then off again from Naas
Clancy's decided our bus to replace
Which puts a smile on our driver's face
We climb aboard and take our places
For our first day at Punchestown Races
We're treated to the Corinthian Suite
A brilliant view and a bite to eat
From our table, we can see the whole course
It just remains to pick the right horse!
At winner selection, I'm not one of the pros
So manage to go home with a few less euros

Clancy's new bus is the star of its fleet
With rules on what you can drink or eat
This carriage is waiting to take us home
But Duncan's met with Molly Malone
And though we're in a food free zone
He's bought us bananas and Toblerone!

The following day, we're back at the course
Hoping to pick the odd winning horse
In the same suite which will include
Waiter service and excellent food

First race is off at five past two
It's been named after - Guess Who?
There's a girl with a mike in a flat hat
On Telly with Jeannie having a chat!
Brian's judging the Best Turned Out
His fairness to do so is not in doubt
Under orders to concentrate his brains
On horses - not the lasses holding their reins



Irene and I grab our place in the sun
On the winners' platform pretending we've won!

Then off to a room for a private viewing
It's rather posh so no shouting or booing
Beacon Edge is favourite and gets home first
So before we head off to quench our thirst
We need to take another short stroll
To present the owners with a rather smart bowl
There are 5 more races this afternoon
If I pick a winner, I'll be over the moon
A lady in our party is rather excited
She's had a winner so quite delighted
Unlike me (who's not won a bean!)
She's just backed Jett in the 4.15
22 to 1! She's jumping for glee
It's paid for tomorrow's shopping spree!

I must be more careful with horses I choose
As most of my bets have managed to lose
I've had 2nds and 3rds during the day
Shame I didn't back them each way!

Our day at the races draws to a close
Backed a few losers - but that's how it goes
Some pulled up, some were fallers
It'll all be forgotten when we get back to Lawlors
Our trip to Ireland is almost done
Every one of us has had some fun
So thank you Jeannie for being able
To arrange the visit to Willie's stable
Plus two more days following horses
At one of Ireland's beautiful courses
We've really had a brilliant time
So thought I'd say my thanks in rhyme
The whole event could not have been better
So wrote you this verse instead of a letter

Maurice



