

## CHRISTINE DUNNETT 01/02/06

A combination of the horses not being entirely right, coupled with the very different types in the yard now, we haven't really kicked off the year quite as emphatically as we did last year. However, like the spring lambs that have already been sighted early in the Norfolk countryside, I think we are ahead of the game again and I can now see we are not far off being ready to compete for honours once again.

Earlier this week we topped off the all-weather gallops and the string are now in full work, which I have to say is what I have been looking forward to since we have been in the doldrums, not having runners has been frustrating as well as laborious.

The horses really look well, so much so I am now considering what targets I want to achieve-initially I am aiming to have five winners by the end of March, which is half the total I had for the same period last year.

I was asked the other day if I felt disappointed-quite frankly I think we peaked early last year and we then had a hard job to see the year out. In addition I think we have a totally different sort of string this year, many of whom are grass types that I am looking forward to running, early on.

We still a number of old favourites that we are running on the dirt, GONE 'N' DUNNETT, SET ALIGHT, KENNINGTON, POLAR FORCE and NORCROFT to name but a few and yes I know they are mostly sprinters.

As you might imagine I was delighted with stable favourite GONE 'N' DUNNETT'S run at Southwell on Sunday-what a ride Kirsty gave him to finish third at 40-1. A number of the racing club members had travelled to Southwell for the race and for them the experience was truly memorable, not least because it was the first time they had been in the parade ring and more importantly the first time they had been in the winner's enclosure area.

To see the happiness in their faces, is something I will never forget-as an owner-trainer I tend to take all that for granted-so I am more than pleased we launched the racing club and that I put GONE 'N' DUNNETT into it.

He runs again tomorrow at Southwell over six furlongs in a conditions race worth a great deal of money. I saw the race and thought not a lot

would enter-which was the case, sadly though, given there is £250 appearance money on offer all those who entered declared. I think my guy is more than capable of holding his own, in fact I think he will be better suited by the longer trip, albeit he has a difficult draw coming off the bend. I am pleased the fancied runners are on his outer, which should help his cause-given a reasonably run race I would like to think he can finish in the money. He is the sort of horse who when he is fit loves his racing.

I understand a number of members are planning to head north again to see him run, which I am delighted about-when I set up the club I wanted people to come along and enjoy the experience with me and so far so good.

On the same card I run SET ALIGHT-I really hope she wants to race now, maybe she will. We are putting a visor on her and we will just have to see what she is about.

Those of you who have subscribed to the racing club will be fully familiar with the new web site, those of you who haven't joined, I would urge you to take a look at it-even though its mine, I am delighted with the finished article which is being constantly updated to keep you in the picture. The club is growing at a slower pace at the moment, but as the year develops I think it will increase, particularly if we have a bit of success, like we did last Sunday.

Its strange a year ago to now I was panicking about foaling and getting my mares covered, this year is quite the opposite, my first foals are not due until early March, so I am able to have a really good look around at what stallions are about and which would best suit my mares.

I had a nice lunch with the Darley operation at Dalham Hall Stud this week, before I took a look at their string, which include stallions like, Doyen, Dubai Destination, Dubawi, Fantastic Light, Red Ransom, Singspiel, Reset, Sulamni and Tobougg of which I may well be using the last three. I have been made a good offer, which I am considering. I have to say I was disappointed when I saw Doyen-but the nice thing this year is I am not under any pressure, especially as I have a few maiden mares who I want to get cover after racing in March.