

Celebrating Women in Racing

International Women's Day 2019

#IWD2019





Introduction

To celebrate International Women's Day this Friday 8th March, Great British Racing is showcasing extraordinary women in jump racing ahead of one of the biggest sporting events of the year, The Festival presented by Magners, at Cheltenham Racecourse, from Tuesday 12th – Friday 15th March.

At the 2018 Cheltenham Festival, four women rode winners setting a new record at the most fiercely contested week in the jump racing calendar.

Katie Walsh, Lizzie Kelly, Bridget Andrews and Harriet Tucker are all etched into Cheltenham – and sporting – history for their unbeatable rides.

Historically, women have achieved great results at The Festival, from Nina Carberry's six winning rides to Jessica Harrington's success in 11 races.

With even more women setting their sights on Festival success in 2019, Great British Racing is celebrating the extraordinary women within jump racing as part of International Women's Day, with:

- An inspirational video featuring three of last year's winning jockeys still currently riding (Lizzie Kelly, Bridget Andrews and Harriet Tucker) which you can view [here](#)
- A series of portraits which will be displayed on The Crescent Walkway at The Festival, featuring current jockeys and trainers who have accomplished incredible successes at The Festival in the last 15 years, as well as trailblazing women whose legacies are synonymous with jump racing.
- A dedicated section on the greatbritishracing.com website profiling leading women in jump and flat racing.

For more information about International Women's Day and many more extraordinary women in racing, visit gbraci.ng/IWD

Cheltenham Festival Winning Jockeys in 2018



Harriet Tucker

Winner of 2018 St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on Pacha Du Polder

Became an unexpected star of the 2018 Cheltenham Festival when overcoming the pain of a dislocated shoulder sustained during the race to drive Pacha Du Polder home to win the Foxhunter Chase, becoming the 14th female rider to enjoy success in the history of the meeting. A groom at the stable of 10-time champion trainer Paul Nicholls, Somerset-born-and-bred Tucker is eyeing a shot at a dream double at Cheltenham next week if she and Pacha Du Polder can make it to the starting line again.



Lizzie Kelly

Winner of 2018 Ultima Handicap Chase on Coo Star Sivola

Cemented her status at the very top table when riding Tea For Two to history-making success in the Grade 1 Kauto Star Novices' Chase at Kempton at the King George VI meeting in 2015, the first top-level success for a female jockey in British jump racing. A second top-drawer victory followed aboard the same horse in the Betway Bowl Chase at Aintree in 2017, making her the first female rider to notch up two Grade 1 victories. With a number of significant Cheltenham successes also to her name, Kelly can often be seen out of the saddle as a regular contributor to TV and radio.



Bridget Andrews

Winner of 2018 Randox County Handicap Hurdle on Mohaayed

Jubilant scenes followed Andrews' success aboard Mohaayed in the County Hurdle at The Cheltenham Festival last year, as she embraced boyfriend Harry Skelton, the stable jockey and brother of Dan Skelton, trainer of her mount, after the winning post. A burgeoning partnership with the Skeltons continues to flourish with Andrews recently riding out her claim and with her next target to ride 100 winners under Rules. Formerly a champion amateur jockey, she hails from a rich racing background, with her father the winning rider in the 1988 Fox Hunters at Aintree, while sister, Gina, is also a successful amateur jockey and fellow Cheltenham Festival winner.



Katie Walsh

Winner of 2018 Weatherbys Champion Bumper on Relegate

One of the most famous Irish jockeys of recent years, Walsh brought an end to a glittering career at Punchestown in April 2018, aptly steering home a winner for Willie Mullins, for whom she had enjoyed much of her success. Daughter of trainer, Ted, and brother to Ruby, Katie has written her own lengthy chapter in her family's rich racing dynasty, with Grade 1 success complementing three Cheltenham Festival winners, as well as finishing third in the 2012 Grand National aboard the heavily-backed Seabass trained by her father – it remains the best finish achieved by a female jockey in the race's history.

The most successful female trainer and jockey at The Festival



Jessica Harrington

Harrington is long-established as one of the most talented dual-purpose trainers in the game with over 40 Grade/Group 1 victories on her glittering CV. She will forever be associated with the legendary Moscow Flyer, but many top-class horses have followed and so has further success at The Cheltenham Festival, with Sizing John's victory in the 2017 Gold Cup helping Harrington on the way to becoming the meeting's all-time leading female trainer with 11 winners. Better yet, Classic glory on the Flat has further enhanced Harrington's reputation, with Alpha Centauri winning the Irish 1000 Guineas in 2018, one of four top-level wins for her superstar filly.



Nina Carberry

Carberry is the leading all-time female jockey at The Cheltenham Festival, recording seven winners at Prestbury Park, four of which have come in the Cross Country Chase and all in the colours of owner JP McManus. The pioneering Carberry was the first female to ride a Grade 1 winner in 2006 when Leading Run took the big bumper at Punchestown, a feat she would repeat in the same race 12 months later. Carberry was also the second female to win Ireland's Amateur Riders' Championship in 2006, a title she again retained the following season. She retired from riding after guiding home one final winner at Punchestown in April 2018.

Photo Series: Women at Cheltenham

To celebrate and shine a light on the achievements of women at The Cheltenham Festival, Great British Racing has developed a series of portraits which will be displayed on the Crescent Walkway for all four days of The Festival at Cheltenham Racecourse from Tuesday 12th – Friday 15th March.

The portraits, taken at Cheltenham Racecourse, feature both current jockeys and trainers who have accomplished

incredible successes at The Festival in the last 15 years, as well as trailblazing women whose legacies are synonymous with jump racing.

In addition to the four winning jockeys from 2018, most successful Festival trainer Jessica Harrington and most successful Festival jockey Nina Carberry, the display includes:



Bryony Frost – Jockey

One of the sport's most engaging and exciting stars, having emerged to take British jump racing by storm in the last couple of years. A swashbuckling crusader for fun, with a refreshingly positive attitude towards every challenge, 23-year-old Frost scored at The Cheltenham Festival as an amateur in 2017, but turning professional shortly afterwards, had a first Grade 1 in the bag within a matter of months. Hailing from a racing family – father Jimmy rode a Grand National winner - and supported by a champion trainer in Paul Nicholls, Frost's talent can only see her career go from strength to further strength.



Gina Andrews – Jockey

Andrews has enjoyed huge success in the amateur ranks, becoming three-time female point-to-point Champion as well as achieving the remarkable feat of riding five winners on the same card, four of whom were trained by Andrews alongside her husband, Tom Ellis. Andrews' interest in the sport naturally started at a young age due to her strong racing heritage and she would ride a winner on her very first ride, just a week after celebrating her 16th birthday. Plenty of success has subsequently followed, crowned by steering home Domesday Book to win the 2017 Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Chase at The Cheltenham Festival.



Lisa O'Neill – Jockey

Gordon Elliott was full of superlatives for O'Neill's ride after her success aboard Tiger Roll in the 2017 National Hunt Chase at The Cheltenham Festival. Not only had O'Neill given her mount a fabulous ride but she also plays an integral role in the setup at Elliott's Cullentra base, from pre-training to bringing horses to the racecourse and riding them too. Despite taking 95 rides to register her first winner, it is testament to O'Neill's hard work and dedication that she has enjoyed success on the grandest stage of all, as well as becoming only the second female rider to win the Kerry National in 2016, a race she would go on to take again 12 months later.



Venetia Williams – Trainer

Williams is the winning-most female trainer in British jump racing history, with over 1,400 winners spanning her 25-year career to date. She is best known for training Mon Mome to win the 2009 Grand National at odds of 100-1, and, in doing so, became the second female trainer, after Jenny Pitman, to win the Aintree showpiece, 21 years after riding in the race as an amateur herself. Williams has trained seven Cheltenham Festival winners, including when saddling the 1-2 in the Freddie Williams Festival Plate in 2009, just hours after Kayf Aramis had won the Pertemps Final earlier on the same day.



Rebecca Curtis – Trainer

Curtis took little time to get her training career up and running when starting out back in 2007, with 100 winners recorded by the end of her first four full seasons with a licence. That level of success gained the attention and the patronage of powerhouse owner JP McManus, whose involvement was quickly rewarded when At Fishers Cross recorded a Grade 1 double when successful at The Cheltenham and Aintree Festivals in 2013. The gelding is one of four Cheltenham Festival winners for Curtis, whose initial foray into racing began under the tutelage of Peter Bowen, then embarking upon an educational spell in America before returning to Wales.



Emma Lavelle – Trainer

Lavelle started out in the training ranks at just 25, but quickly affirmed herself as a force to be reckoned with in British jump racing. Lavelle tasted Cheltenham Festival success in 2008 and 2009, with Crack Away Jack bolting up in the Fred Winter Juvenile Hurdle and Pause And Clause landing the Martin Pipe Conditionals' Hurdle the following year. A third Festival success could soon be on the horizon as Paisley Park heads to the Stayers' Hurdle, seeking to provide his trainer with a second Grade 1 success of the season, following on from December's JLT Hurdle Victory at Ascot in December last year.



Jenny Pitman OBE – Former Trainer

Pitman is widely-renowned as one of the greatest trainers in jump racing history. Her toughness and determination saw her blaze a trail for women in racing in the 1970s and unprecedented success was to follow. She became the first female to train a Cheltenham Gold Cup winner when Burrough Hill Lad won in 1984, one of two victories in racing's blue riband event for Pitman. The second success came in 1991 when Garrison Savannah won, ridden by her son Mark Pitman. She was also the first woman to train the winner of the Grand National courtesy of Corbiere in 1983, again, an achievement she would repeat when Royal Athlete landed the 1995 renewal. A true pioneer of our sport.



Henrietta Knight – Former Trainer

A much-liked and hugely-respected figure in the sport, Knight is best known for training three-time Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, Best Mate. She began training in 1989 and would go on to send out over 700 winners in a hugely successful career with a total of 14 Grade 1 victories, including the handling of Edredon Bleu, winner of the 2000 Queen Mother Champion Chase, one of seven Cheltenham Festival winners for Knight. Following her retirement in 2012, "Hen" remains heavily involved in racing with a close association with friend and neighbour Mick Channon, purchasing his 2018 Cheltenham Festival winner, Master Whitaker, for owner Tim Radford.



Caroline Robinson – Former Jockey

Caroline Beasley (now Robinson) made history as the first female jockey to win at The Cheltenham Festival when partnering Eliogarty, who she owned herself, to success in the Christie's Foxhunter Chase in March 1983. The amateur rider then became a pioneer when scoring over the Grand National fences as she guided the same horse to victory in the Fox Hunters Chase at Aintree three years later. Robinson is now a leading point-to-point trainer and breeder based in Shropshire, with her daughters, Immy and Kitty both successful amateur jockeys themselves and riding the majority of her runners on the track.



Gee Armytage – Former Jockey

Arguably the leading female rider of her generation, Armytage became the second woman to ride a Cheltenham Festival winner when partnering The Ellier to success in 1987. At the same meeting, she doubled her tally for the week aboard Gee-A and would go on to tie with Peter Scudamore in the Festival's prestigious overall jockey standings, only losing on count back through placed efforts. It was a monumental achievement which went a long way to change the perception of female riders in the sport, with Armytage going on to ride over 100 winners during her career, as well as partnering Gee-A in the 1988 Grand National.



Women to watch in 2019:



Rachael Blackmore – Jockey

Blackmore made the bold move to turn professional in March 2015 – only the second female jump jockey to do so in Irish racing history – but has never looked back. She is currently second in the Irish Jockeys' Championship and preparing herself for a battle for the crown with Paul Townend in the final months of the campaign. It took just over two years for Blackmore to ride out her claim when partnering her 60th career winner in June 2017, shortly after becoming the first female champion conditional in Ireland. At 29, Blackmore has never been riding better and further success is assured if she can maintain such remarkable progress.



Kayley Woollacott – Trainer

Woollacott took over from husband, Richard, in exceptionally difficult circumstances following his death in early 2018. However, she has carried on his legacy with great credit, leaning on her own experience having previously trained over 100 point-to-point winners, and scored a poignant victory with Lalor winning a Grade 1 hurdle at last season's Randox Health Grand National meeting. The stable star is on course to contest the Grade 1 Racing Post Arkle at this season's Cheltenham Festival, and goes there with leading claims following the horse's ultra-impressive victory in a Grade 2 over the same course-and-distance in November.



Lucy Alexander – Jockey

Having twice begun university courses, only for the call of racing to prove too great to resist, Alexander made an immediate impact once committing to the sport. Within months of turning professional, she had broken a longstanding record when partnering an impressive 38 winners in the 2011/12 campaign, the biggest seasonal tally for a female professional jump jockey enabling her to become Britain's first-ever female champion conditional. Alexander has gone on to ride well over 150 winners, despite a number of enforced absences caused by injuries sustained in action. Based in Scotland and a popular choice for local trainers, she is now firmly on course for her most successful season in the last three or four years and continues to ride with style, strength and intelligence.



Sue Smith – Trainer

A former international show jumper, Smith initially took up training racehorses as a hobby back in 1990 but that quickly turned into a successful vocation and a place in racing history has followed. Smith would become the third female to train a Grand National winner when Auroras Encore won at Aintree in 2013, a landmark victory for the Yorkshire trainer who is ably supported by her husband, Harvey. A glut of Graded winners have arrived during her 30-year training career, with Cheltenham success also coming her way courtesy of Mister McGoldrick, who landed the Racing Post Plate at the Festival in 2008.



Lucinda Russell OBE – Trainer

Russell is a leading powerhouse in Scottish racing, dominating the Scottish and Northern racing circuits and landing some of racing's biggest prizes along the way. A breakout season in 2011/12 was capped with Grade 1 success courtesy of Brindisi Breeze, who landed the Albert Bartlett Hurdle under the late Campbell Gillies at The Cheltenham Festival. Better was yet to come for the Kinross handler, as One For Arthur would land the 2017 Randox Health Grand National, a success that no doubt contributed to Russell receiving the OBE for services to racing in 2018.



Amy Murphy – Trainer

When first becoming a trainer in 2016, Murphy was the youngest licence-holder in Britain. But any thought that she might need time to hit the ground running was quickly dispelled. By that time, Murphy had already worked for Tom Dascombe and Luca Cumani, as well as for Gai Waterhouse in Australia. Her greatest moment so far came when Kalashnikov took the valuable Belfair Hurdle at Newbury in February 2018. Kalashnikov is entered in the Racing Post Arkle Trophy at this year's Cheltenham Festival.



A timeline of women at the Festival

1966

Jackie Brutton becomes the first woman to train a winning horse at The Festival with Snowdra Queen winning the United Hunts Challenge Cup (no longer run at The Festival)

Caroline Beasley (now Robinson) becomes the first woman to win a race at The Festival with Eliogarty, in the 1983 Foxhunter Chase

1983

Jenny Pitman OBE becomes the first woman to train a Cheltenham Gold Cup winner with Burrough Hill Lad in 1984, one of two victories in racing's blue riband event for Pitman

1984

Gee Armytage becomes the second woman to ride a Cheltenham Festival winner when partnering The Ellier to success. At the same meeting, she doubles her tally for the week aboard Gee-A and ties with Peter Scudamore in the Festival's prestigious overall jockey standings, only losing on count back through placed efforts

1987

Linda Sheedy (now Griffiths) becomes the first female jockey to ride in The Cheltenham Gold Cup, partnering Foxbury in the 1984 renewal

1989

Katie Rimell becomes the third woman to ride a winner at The Cheltenham Festival, enjoying success when partnering Three Counties, who she rode in her own colours, in the 1989 Foxhunter Chase. Her mount was trained by her grandmother, Mercy Rimell, who, herself, was the first woman to train a Champion Hurdle winner when Gaye Brief scored at the Festival in 1983.

Polly Curling wins the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on Fantus

1995

Jenny Pitman OBE has her eighth win at The Festival when Princeful wins the Sun Racing Stayers' Hurdle

1998

Fiona Needham wins the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on Last Option

2002

Rilly Goschen wins the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on Earthmover

2004

Nina Carberry wins the Boodles Juvenile Handicape Hurdle (Fred Winter) on Dabiroun

2005

Best Mate trained by **Henrietta Knight** wins The Cheltenham Gold Cup for the third consecutive year, her seventh win at The Festival

2007

Nina Carberry wins the Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase for the first time on Heads On the Ground

Nina Carberry wins the Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase for the second time on Garde Champetre

2008

2009

Nina Carberry wins the Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase for the third time, and on Garde Champetre for the second time

Katie Walsh enjoys a double at The Festival winning the National Hunt Chase on Poker De Sivola and the Randox Health County Handicap Hurdle on Thousand Stars

2010

2013

Veneta Williams enjoys her sixth win at The Festival when Carrickboy wins the Brown Advisory & Merriebelle Stable Plate Handicap Chase

Nina Carberry wins the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on The Fringe for the first time

2015

Rebecca Curtis has her fourth winner at The Festival when Irish Cavalier wins the Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase

2016

Nina Carberry wins the Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase for the fourth time on Josies Orders together with the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on The Fringe

Jessica Harrington's Sizing John wins The Cheltenham Gold Cup, and in doing so gives her an 11th winner at the Festival

2017

Gina Andrews wins the Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Handicap Chase on Domesday Book

2018

Cheltenham Festival history is made when a record four female jockeys ride winners

- **Lizzie Kelly** is the first professional female rider to win a race at The Festival, riding Coo Star Sivola in the Ultima Handicap Chase
- **Bridget Andrews** wins the Randox County Handicap Hurdle on Mohaayed, one year after her sister Gina's Festival win
- **Harriet Tucker** wins the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase on Pacha Du Polder
- **Katie Walsh** wins the Weatherbys Champion Bumper on Relegate

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