

# THE PACKAGE



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

*Ayr Gold Cup winner Martin Fetherston-Godley, who swapped training for accountancy*

# Making a different kind of numbers game pay dividends

**M**ARTIN FETHERSTON-GODLEY is refreshingly forthright over the reasons why he quit training four years after his most successful season in 1995, which included a Ladbroke Ayr Gold Cup with the mare Royal Figurine.

"To be frank, I probably wasn't good enough," he admits. "I came to the conclusion that my career had gone as far as it possibly could. It was time for me to look elsewhere."

He adds: "After our best year I hadn't increased the string beyond 25. I was pretty hopeless at selling horses to people. You tend to run out of enthusiasm trying to persuade mates to buy one. Sadly, several of my owners died, including Craig Pearman who had Royal Figurine and throughout was a terrific supporter of the stable."

Unlike many trainers in pursuit of alternative employment, he had a safety net in place. Before coming into racing he trained as an accountant. He later topped that up with a Masters in Business Administration at Bath University.



*Martin Fetherston-Godley in 1999: "I probably wasn't good enough"*

"Oh yes," he recalls. "That's another reason why I stopped. As an accountant I was always too aware how little money I was earning!" Now 53, Fetherston-Godley is unnecessarily modest over his achievements for he

ticked over with a commendable strike-rate from his Kennet House stables, a Listed property in the centre of East Ilsley village in Berkshire. Like the nearby yards run by Roddy Armytage and Kim Bailey, it was to be swallowed up for residential use.

He lives at Kennet House, but a different one, 25 miles away in the Wiltshire village of Wilcot, whose best known resident was the actor David Niven after he married a local girl, Primula Rollo. "Our cricket pavilion is named after David, though it's not in the best of shape these days," he says. "A similar comment can be applied to my batting record there last season. I was pretty awful."

He commutes four days a week to Andoversford in Gloucestershire, where he is the financial director for Standard Financial Ltd, a successful company that runs a network of independent financial advisers.

"I've always enjoyed working with numbers, and although the job will never be as exciting as training I thoroughly enjoy it. I miss those glorious spring mornings up on the Downs and the close contact with horses. I don't miss the telephone

calls. When I first came out of racing, the thought of what happens next was quite terrifying. I expect a lot of ex-trainers will tell you that."

For a while he freelanced helping trainers with their accounts. He no longer does so, and although he does not say in as many words, the tone of his voice suggested that he found it too depressing.

Little more than a mile from his office in the Cotswolds, there is an old friend. Kim Bailey trains at Withington. "We can't seem to shake each other off. Both being lovers of good food and fine wines we meet up regularly for lunch in Northleach at The Wheatsheaf, which is run by Craig Pearman's son, Sam."

Although no longer actively involved in racing, Fetherston-Godley remains a popular character within the racing fraternity. His friends locally include Roger Charlton, Brian Meehan and Ben and Lucy Sangster.

Asked if he would consider returning as an owner, he laughs: "No. I can't do that because it would be too difficult to pick a trainer."

**Rodney Masters**

# HORSE PLAY

Just for the fun of it

## ►► Googling a runner

**What's Occurrin** 1.40 Market Rasen The Welsh catchphrase became the talk of everywhere in Britain following the success of the award-winning BBC comedy Gavin & Stacey. What's Occurring, another way of saying what's happening, was adopted by Ruth Jones's character Nessa in the hit series, and following on from the show's success it seems to have got everybody talking. Facebook sites have been set up in its name, mobile ringtones have also incorporated it, and, of course, racing will be joining in the fun when Jill Gittus's What's Occurrin runs today.

## ►► Easy as 1-2-3

**1 Which former jockey, journalist and broadcaster part-owns Carruthers?**

**2 Which is the only racecourse in Northumberland?**

**3 Over what distance is the Dante Stakes run over?**

Answers on page 30

## ►► On this day . . .

January 24, 1960 Noblesse, the greatest filly or mare ever trained in Ireland, was foaled. A stablemate and contemporary of the great colt Ragusa, she was trained by Paddy Prendergast but never raced in