

In the Klarion Spotlight



THIS MONTH: Mike Spence

AT just 24, Mike Spence has already made a significant mark on the world of British horseracing. In 2010, while a business management student at Newcastle University, he secured backing from Racing for Change and launched Student Racing, a magazine and website aimed at attracting students into the sport, jointly with Alex Bell. He also rode out with the MJR string on a number of occasions. Mike became a committee member of the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association Next

Generation Club, and, after finishing his studies, he assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer in High Rise Racing, an online tipping service in which he demonstrated his mastery of the all-weather scene over a couple of seasons. Mike has also entered the ranks of racehorse owners on his own account, although he has yet to have a horse in training at Kingsley Park. Son of MJR owner Alan Spence, a Vice President of Chelsea FC, Mike has clearly inherited his father's business acumen and strong work ethic.

Date and place of birth: October 20, 1990 in Epsom, Surrey.

Partner: I have a girlfriend, Angelica.

How, and when, were you introduced to horseracing? Dad has owned horses since 1972, so as soon as I was born really.

And to MJR? In 2004. Dad had his first MJR runner on April 20, 2004, Spirit Of France. He was also our first MJR winner in June 2004 (at Ripon) and he reached an OR of 95, winning three races for us.

What is your main occupation? I used to run a tipping line, High Rise Racing, which was around for 13 months and posted a large profit but the time wasn't worth the money it was generating from subscriptions. I now focus on form analysis, compiling my own handicap ratings with a view to betting, race planning and buying horses.

If you could choose any other career,

what would it be? I'd be a footballer.

Where do you live and what took you to that area? I've just bought a flat in Putney. It's close enough to London to get in and out of the city very easily and happens to be just a few minutes away from Stamford Bridge.

What was your most exciting racing moment? The first horse I owned was called Black Minstrel. He defied a 573-day absence to win at Lingfield on his debut for me as a 4/5 favourite in a 0-55 handicap having been a first price of 12/1. Jim Crowley rode him and he was still in midfield as they came into the



Michael, left, with his sister Sarah and his parents Karen and Alan at Royal Ascot

straight, stuck in a pocket. The leader had kicked four lengths clear off the front, yet once out in the clear Black Minstrel somehow managed to make up the four lengths and win on the line by half a length.

What is the best horse you have been associated with? Jukebox Jury.

Your racing colours and why did you choose them? Red body, white sleeves and a blue hat. Just to make a slight change from my dad's colours.

What is the best name you have given to a horse and why did you choose it? And the name you wish you had thought of? Double Up was the first horse I owned that was named, albeit it's not the best name in the world! I wish I had come up with Rock Of Gibraltar.

The best race you have won and what it meant to you personally? Jukebox Jury won the Irish St Leger for us as a family, which meant a huge amount as it was our first classic.

Choose one race to have replayed on TV. Frankel winning the Queen Anne.

The race you would most like to win? The Derby.

What is your favourite holiday destination? Barbados.

Place/s you most want to visit? Tahiti.

What is your favourite sport outside racing? Football.

Other recreations? I probably spend too much time in the gym.

Favourite Racecourse? Why? Goodwood. When the sun is out, there's nowhere better than Glorious Goodwood.

Least favourite? Why? Newmarket's Rowley Mile. The viewing from the stands is terrible, you need a pair of binoculars to see the screen properly. You're better staying at home.

What is the last film you saw and film you would most recommend?

Gone Girl was the last film I saw and I'd recommend Limitless.

Last book you read and book you would most recommend? Rafa Nadal's autobiography was the last book I read. I'd recommend Harry Redknapp's autobiography.

Favourite TV programme? Suits.

What schools did you attend? St John's, Leatherhead and Shrewsbury House.

What were your best, and worst, subjects at school? Best would have to be Economics; I was terrible at Chemistry and Physics.

Are you superstitious? Very, although I hide it very well! I don't step on drains, I always wear the same colour of socks and I'll never wear red.

Lucky number? 8.

Two people you would most like to be seated next to at a dinner party? Rafa Nadal and Sir Alex Ferguson.



Jukebox Jury, left under Johnny Murtagh, locked in a battle against Duncan, Eddie Ahern up, in the 2011 Irish St Leger

Do you have any pet hates? Where do I start . . . ?

Favourite author? I don't read fiction books so I'll go with Andrew Beyer, an American horseracing expert, who wrote some of the books that helped me make the step up from a novice horse-player.

Favourite singer/band? Ed Sheeran.

What pets do you have? I have a Patterdale terrier called JT (after Chelsea skipper John Terry!)

What kind of car do you drive? BMW 3 series sport.

What cd/s do you currently have in your car? The Script.

What station is your radio tuned to? Capital FM.

What would be your 6 desert island discs? Emile Sande, Ed Sheeran and four Ibiza chill mix tapes.

A restaurant that you would recommend? La Orient in Esher, just down the road from Sandown Park, will rival any Chinese restaurant you've been to.

What would you choose as your last meal? Porterhouse steak with chips at Hawksmoor in London.

What is your favourite drink? Vodka, soda and fresh lime.

Who has had the biggest influence on your life? Probably my Dad as he introduced me to racing.

What was the best advice you were ever given? You'll never get where you want working 9-5.

Tell us something about yourself that we probably don't know. I have a scar from where I was bitten by a lion.

Do you have any regrets or things you would like to have done differently? Not yet.

Do you have a racing hero, human or equine? Tony McCoy for his workrate and Jukebox Jury for his determination to win.

