

Book Review

By John Scanlon

So You Want To Own A Racehorse?

By Philip Woodcock-Jones

The Choir Press, 2022

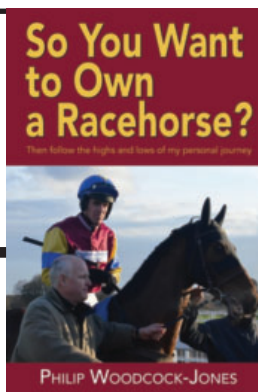
I AM indebted to the author, Philip Woodcock-Jones, for sending me a copy of his recently published book to review.

His passion for racing has its roots in the halcyon days of televised racing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He was keen on all sports as a youngster and used to dream of playing cricket for his native Derbyshire, but the sport he had most access to was horse racing, a staple part of sports coverage on television at the time.

Captivated by what he describes as 'the whole mystery, ritual and terminology' of the sport, he began to follow the fortunes of horses such as Mandarin, Pas Seul, Frenchman's Cove and Mill House, and they became his sporting heroes -- alongside Bobby Charlton!

The normal demands of life and work conspired to curtail his watching of the sport, but his interest was rekindled; partly at the instigation of his wife, who had ridden as a child and who bought a riding horse in 1979, and partly because of the exploits of the great Desert Orchid. He credits Desert Orchid's Cheltenham Gold Cup win as inspiring him to dream of becoming a racehorse owner.

Another of his equine heroes was Jodami, and when on



holiday in North Yorkshire he happened upon the village of Brandsby. Realising that this was where Jodami had been trained, he phoned trainer Peter Beaumont from a phone box wondering whether it would be possible to see the horse. Peter Beaumont's generous response to that call cemented his introduction to the sport in general and shared ownership in particular.

The volume charts 'the highs and lows of my personal journey', though he warned that he is a follower of National

Hunt racing. Thus, his journey has stops at tracks such as Market Rasen, Sedgefield, Bangor and Uttoxeter, rather than Ascot, Epsom and Newmarket.

It's an easy and enjoyable read, and it's particularly noticeable that many elements of the narrative are lacking in detail. I suspect that the author has deliberately followed that course in an effort to make the book more readable. But, given the title, readers would probably like to know the details of the 'deals' he did with trainers regarding fees. And other information too, such as just how much it costs to enter horses in races, or how much you will earn if your horse finishes fourth in a novice hurdle at Uttoxeter.

The second part of the book contains the author's ideas and suggestions as to how one might join in 'the thrill of ownership', together with some general thoughts and information on horse racing in Britain.

In many ways, Woodcock-Jones's story reads like a

cautionary tale, as, along his journey through shared ownership, he has come up against many of the pitfalls awaiting the unwary. I found myself constantly comparing some of the difficulties he had to overcome with the top-class model of shared ownership offered by Johnston Racing – the Kingsley Park partnerships. Anyone who really wants to take steps towards fulfilling a dream of racehorse ownership would benefit from reading this book, but make sure you look at the information on the Kingsley Park partnerships on our website too!

PHILIP Woodcock-Jones's passion for horses and for the sport shines through the pages of this book, and it was particularly pleasing to read that his efforts in organising syndicates/partnerships have borne fruit in that one of his colleagues in an early partnership was inspired to start his own successful ownership syndicate.

So You Want To Own A Racehorse is available through Amazon at the price of £12.95. ■

Dr Pat Sells, of Chasemore Farm, has sent me a copy of his fascinating poster entitled Elevation Maps of British Racecourses of the Flat Pattern, which is now available to order through Racing Post Books.

Prepared using satellite data to compare their topography, this A1 poster displays longitudinal sections of some of Britain's historic racecourses. Produced on luxury matt paper, this will appeal to racing 'geeks' desperate for all and any information to add to their memory banks, as well as those looking for an unusual addition to their racing-themed 'wall art'. J.S

