

George drawn in by the sheer excitement of racing

KINGSLEY Park partner George Donaldson was, like so many people, drawn into racing by TV coverage of the Grand National. The family would gather round the screen to watch the race, and the earliest winner George can recall is the grey horse, Nicolaus Silver, who won the race in 1961.

As a boy, George was taken along by his dad on visits to his local courses, Hamilton and, the now defunct, Lanark. While George remembers these outings fondly, he had little or no idea then that he would one day be involved more directly in the sport.

Based in Bishopbriggs, near Glasgow, George got to know Mark through Brian Palmer, the owner of Mark's first winner as a trainer, Hinari Video. George's company had some business dealings with Brian, and George was invited to Brian's box at Ayr when he had a runner there in 1988.



George Donaldson

In time, this led George to involvement in a number of partnerships with Mark, Always Trying II, Always Trying IV and, more recently, various Kingsley Park partnerships.

"Favourite memories from the early days include Always Baileys winning at Carlisle and Goodwood, and Always A Rock, who won three races in a row at Wolverhampton, Musselburgh and Newmarket," recalls George.

"The remarkable thing about that run

was that the five winners had five different jockeys – Kevin Darley, John Egan, Robert Winston, Greg Fairley and J-P Guillaumbert!"

As to the best thing about the Kingsley Park partnerships, George says: "It's the opportunity to have an involvement with one of the country's best stables, with confident, dedicated and top-quality staff. It's great to get to meet like-minded people through the partnerships, but clearly it's the realistic pricing of the partnerships which make it affordable."

Over the years, George has managed to visit every racetrack in the UK. His favourite is Goodwood, which he has now visited in a number of capacities – racegoer, owner and partaker of a corporate jolly! On the other hand, George has no doubt as to his luckiest course – Carlisle, where horses in which he has had a share have run twice, and won twice.



Groom Paddy Trainor with Always A Rock and JP Guillaumbert

Pushed to identify a racing hero, George nominates Frankie Dettori and Mick Kinane as jockeys whose careers

he has enjoyed following, but his main passion is simply to enjoy the thrills of horse racing. Asked to nominate his best

recent memory of involvement in ownership at Kingsley Park, George can't resist picking Poetic Steps' debut win at Hamilton last July for KP6.

"It was especially thrilling for me to see both Villa Tora and Poetic Steps winning at my local track, Hamilton," said George, "but the unexpected excitement of Poetic Steps' win was something very special."

Given George's long involvement with the partnerships, we asked him what was the biggest improvement he had seen in them over the years.

"For me, the biggest change has been in the level of communication with the yard, which is now first-class."

George is looking forward to another year of involvement with the new Kingsley Park partnerships, and in particular to seeing Poetic Steps progress as a three-year-old. Whatever happens we're sure George will enjoy following his horses! ■

DECEMBER was one of those rare months when our partnerships were without a runner. Even so, as a result of Mark's new Kingsley Park Owners Club initiative, all owners involved in any of our current partnerships had the opportunity of going racing with the club's seven runners during the month.

Back at base, work has been unrelenting in continuing the education of the new juveniles in KP8 and KP10. The young horses progress from working in long reins to being ridden away, then spend some time hack cantering in the purpose-built trotting ring before progressing to cantering on the all-weather gallop.

At the moment, some of the most forward are already cantering twice over two furlongs as they continue to learn what's expected of them.

It's too soon to say which of the six KP8/KP10 horses will make it to the track first, but as we enter the New Year excitement is mounting for the campaign ahead.



Kingsley Park 10's Dream Ahead colt out of Black Dahlia under Punjraj Singh

KP6 fillies ready for second campaign

VILLA TORA and **Poetic Steps** are being readied for their three-year-old campaigns at Kingsley Park. Villa Tora has been campaigned principally over five and six furlongs to date, but she is a half-sister to Tariq (by the sprinter Kyllachy), who was a Group 3-winning, seven-furlong specialist and strong enough over a mile to be third in the Group 1 Lockinge.

Poetic Steps was raced over six and seven furlongs as a juvenile. She is a full sister to Laureate, who has proved highly versatile in trip for owner Stuart Counsell, and was beaten only a head over a mile and three-quarters at Wetherby for the yard last summer.

Both fillies are likely to improve for time and distance, and with three wins clocked up between them already, and with both starting the season on decent marks, the partners look to be in for an exciting time!