



Mondays with
DAVID ALLAN



THE snows have cleared as our flag flyer canters all the way around Side Hill.

Temperature changes lead to layers at sales, to equine flu and to a possible happy ending

BETWEEN the Cape Premier Yearling Sale and Tattersalls February Sale that follows almost immediately, a 25 degree temperature difference would be par for the meteorological course. But this year, although that difference was about the same, it was book-ended by unusual figures.

Customarily, Cape Town for CPYS approaches 30 degrees then, dashing north in the hunt for just-turned-3 year olds to race abroad (we got five this time), we drop to around 5 degrees. It's a recipe for catching 'flu in amongst a sales population arriving from hotter places than South Africa while others such as our clients come from deep-freeze winters – if from the USA, from terrifyingly low temperatures this year.

In 2019, in CPYS week, Cape Town hovered around only 23/25 degrees but the flight took us into minus 9 in the early morning and daytime highs of zero. Same

change as usual, starting lower.

Outside for the majority of three days, the marrow was chilled. Nevertheless, the sale was quite successful, especially because of its 95% clearance rate. Buyers who want horses want horses, never mind the weather.

The levels – for a mix of mares, just-turned yearlings and 2 year olds, and horses in training - were down from 2018 only because of the absence of a freak lot the year before. The Markus Jooste **(to page 2)**



WILLIE John 1.9 million guineas at Tatts February 2018. (tattersalls.com)

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partnership horse WILLIE JOHN – a once raced winning 2 year old - went through that ring in an arm's length sale for 1.9 million guineas, many multiples of the usual top lots. At 3 in new colours, he raced just twice winning a Novice then finishing last in a Group 3.

Human 'Flu was kept at bay by layers from chin to toe, but Equine 'Flu, as if commenting on the Arctic weather, has since appeared in a concentration.

The BHA is to be commended for immediate action with regard to known cases of Equine 'Flu being on racecourses – meaning that the yards of other runners at the same meetings are immediately restricted in their public training areas pending swab tests or "The Swab Fest" as it is being called.

Fair enough. But in the words of a leading Newmarket vet "It's equine 'flu not ebola" (and one might also say, it's equine 'flu not AHS, to put it into perspective, although one is highly contagious and the other not).

Equine 'Flu is endemic in the UK. The horse population is rigorously vaccinated. Dozens and dozens of incidences throughout the season of horses having a runny nose, or being "challenged", are or could be equine 'flu in its suppressed (by vaccine) forms. There is no

getting rid of it, so to suggest that racing might be shut down until it is "under control" invites a scary interpretation.

When it sneaked into Australia (where they "didn't have equine flu") it had a huge impact because the horse population was not vaccinated.

Simply put, it will always be in the UK. Gallows humour on Newmarket Heath generated remarks like "Over-reaction? See you at Goodwood", meaning end July/early August.

Over 170 training yards have been restricted while their populations are swabbed and tested – because they have sent at least one runner to a racecourse where a known case has visited.

"Shut down" conjures up images of the terrible impact of Foot & Mouth 18 years ago. With all racing suspended anyway for – we hope – a few more days, this means (in Newmarket) being sent out to exercise on the Heath's several thousand acres between 12.30 and 3pm whereas normally all training will have finished by noon or sooner and the Heath is then the province of dog-walkers.

Here's hoping that the BHA can dig itself out.

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And at a more dramatic level of disease processing, here's hoping in South Africa for the crystallisation of the seminal Adrian Todd "exports" interview with James Goodman on Winning Ways on 4th February. This is as clearly presented a statement as one could expect after a long period of (understandably) playing cards close to the chest for fear of being seen to second guess negotiating counterparts. The Brexit negotiators for both sides and a stack of journalists with biases could learn something from SAEHP.

This column has of course referred to "exports" and the potential impact but has not speculated on the detail of the process. Let the governmental and scientific experts get on with it. Having been involved in a support role for a few years - one not necessary now other than once or twice since the new science shone through in Professor Ian Sanne's and Dr John Grewar's presentation at the January 2017 ITBF - we have been kept up to speed, now feeling a sense of release that SAEHP has gone public in South Africa.

It all still boils down to the concluding part of an EU audit that has largely already taken place, but the tantalising prospect is now more clearly shown. Just as we shall be flying back south soon, for a temperature increase, so we hope that the right EU officials are looking forward to their trip.—tt.



TATTS' Fox in the snow. (tattersalla.com)



David & Yoshi Allan at the CTS Cocktail Party.



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Gary's tucking in!



FORMER SA jockey and riding master Gary Waterston was treated to all sorts of delights in Singapore last week by his friend Debbie Hawkins, another former South African. Why is Gary eating so much? Because the food in Singapore is simply superb, and because he can! Gary is based in Korea these days and said to be doing very well. - tt.