



Mondays with DAVID ALLAN



Craven Week's Ready To Run Sale between CTS April and the Nationals



Tattersalls Craven Breeze Up Sale colt checks out the bidders.

In between two upcoming yearling sales in South Africa next month is Craven Week.

This is not Craven Week as in the annual rugby tournament for South Africa's schoolboy teams named after the legendary Dr Danie Craven. It is "Craven Week" as in "The Craven Meeting" at Newmarket, England 15th-19th April 2018, which every year signals that the Turf Season – started a couple of weeks beforehand – is getting into full swing.

In South Africa, rugby players and fans all know about Dr Craven. The same cannot be said for all racing people in the UK when it comes to the Newmarket "Craven". Reach for Wikipedia to discover that William Craven, a Jockey Club member,

strongly supported racing to the extent of bringing about the first Craven Meeting in 1771, centred on the Craven Stakes.

Run on the third day of the meeting (this year that means on Thursday 19th April), the Craven Stakes is a Group 3 2,000 Guineas Trial. Racegoers flock to see the Guineas candidates in the flesh for the first time since their 2 year old exploits during the previous September/October. Other trials and significant races are spread through the three racing days Tuesday-Thursday, followed by the Greenham Stakes, yet another trial option, **(to page 2)**



Standing up close to listen as well as see...Sheikh Mohammed at the Craven.

DAVID ALLAN (cont fm p1)

at Newbury a couple of days later. Decisions as to the trial in which to run are often influenced by the racing ground across the country with final declarations two days before the races.

Even with spring sprung all around the country, the Craven Meeting often demands the wearing of overcoats with the last of the Siberian winds crossing Europe to the flat lands of East Anglia uninterrupted by anything really high. This year with luck, the extraordinary 2018 Beast from the East and this weekend's mini Beast from the East – there are 5 inches of snow outside the window as I type tonight, due to dissolve tomorrow - has exhausted the supply of cold wind, so that this year's Craven will be somewhat more balmy. Selfishly, I hope it will also be wetter for the benefit of a Hintlesham Racing runner in the week.



The Beast from the East froze the canal on our dog walk

Also during Craven Week is the Tattersalls Craven Breeze Up (aka Ready to Run) Sale, Europe's pre-

mier such event.

With very much a "Book 1" feel about it, the Craven Breeze Up's median last year was 110,000 guineas or just under 2 million rand at today's rates. Unusually for Europe, the (only) 172 lots are spread across two evening sessions starting at 5.30 straight after Tuesday and Wednesday racing across the road. The breezing (gallops) happen 0900-12noon on the Monday with those watching mostly eschewing the stands and bacon butties in favour of standing close to the breezers so that they can hear them breathe as they go by – or preferably barely hear them breathe.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club is a regular visitor. Last year they bought three, two of which were at around double the median. In January this year, Mark Richards and team importantly for us all attended the Cape Premier Yearling Sale, startlingly bypassing Magic Millions and buying several. The CTS April Sale having contracted to two sessions, finishes on Friday 13th evening so it is technically possible to get to Newmarket for 15th. We'll see.

At the other end of Craven Week - ending on 19th evening on the racecourse - it is physically possible to skip Newbury and get to Johannesburg for viewing at the Emperors Palace Nationals from the weekend with the sale starting on Tuesday 24th. Such a window for viewing is comparable to the viewing opportunity in substantial European sales, but it is tight.

All this adds up to a riveting three weeks of sales in two countries, as well as meaningful racing. That in itself is something to highlight and watch on line if not attending. But does the proximity of these dates matter?

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Colt by Canford Cliffs makes 300,000 gns at the Craven Breeze Up. All commissions from bookings at Highlands arising from this publicity gratefully accepted...

DAVID ALLAN (cont..)

Right now, probably not a lot. The sales companies make their decisions knowingly, based on various parameters and priorities. However, it is worth keeping a close eye on the juxtaposition of sales around the world.

The SA sales programme changed significantly from 2017 to 2018 and may do so again in 2019 to, we all hope, the benefit of the industry. "Exports" may bring greater overseas numbers with perhaps further gains such as HKJC skipping Magic Millions in favour of a South African sale.

There is also the reverse activity i.e. the prospect in better times of South Africans buying at UK or Irish ready to run sales.

Wrong hemisphere? Yes. Or maybe no. After all, HKJC routinely buys in the "wrong" hemisphere for Hong Kong as well as the "right" one.

Just as there is a strong argument in favour of buying northern 3 year olds in training to aim to win The Met or another SA target, so we can reflect on these northern 2 year old breezers already being four months into their 2 year old years.

The Craven sale is only one event. The Tattersalls Guineas Breeze Up 3rd-4th May (2017 median approx. R 438,000 at today's rates) immediately precedes 2,000 and 1,000 Guineas weekend (and

does not clash with the Nationals as it has in the past). On 9th-10th April the daddy of them all is held in Doncaster (median ZAR 500,000) and the biggest of all is the relatively new sale at Goresbridge near Kilkenny in May, when they are a month older.

Worthy of mention is the Tattersalls Ireland sale at Ascot – not a contradiction in terms because when Tattersalls took over the sales at Ascot and Cheltenham, the prize was the jumping market in which Tatts Ireland excels. But the flat side has developed as well and the sale on 4th-5th April is increasingly good. Median around R 350,000 today with, obviously, plenty either side of that figure. - **tt.**



Toormore by Arakan out of a Danetime mare won the Craven before being sold to Godolphin.

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