

A tribute to Limerick's Ron Barry: AN UNAFFECTED CHAMPION

By BOB KELLY

ON Sunday morning last Ron Barry left Grey-stoke, Cumberland, and flew out to Greece for a very well-earned three weeks' holiday in Corfu. He left behind a National Hunt season of activity that has put him at the pinnacle of his riding career . . . in the racing world this, very definitely, has been Ron Barry's year.

Long before Saturday's wind-up of Britain's National Hunt racing season Ron was assured of the title of Champion jockey, but until he took one of his strongest finishes to land Davon, the winner of Cartmel's Prior Handicap Hurdle, the 12 winners ridden by Josh Gifford

during the 1966-67 season stood as an all-time record in jumping's statistics.

Now there is a new name in the turf history books and very few nice fellows could have put it there . . . Ron Barry is now the champion of champions, and Josh Gifford, the man who took the title from Fred Winter, spoke volumes at Cartmel when, after congratulating Ron, he said: "It is a great feat and he deserves it. I'm glad he didn't keep me in suspense too long. Although he is based in the North, Ron has travelled all over Ireland to achieve this record. My record had to go sometime and it could not have been done by a nicer fellow."

That tribute by Josh Gifford just about illustrates the very high standing in which 30-year-old Ron is held in these isles, when this most amazing champion arrives at his home in Raheen after his vacation in Corfu. I imagine that

some very proud people will want to acknowledge his magnificent achievement.

Crescent educated

Born February 28, 1943, in Limerick, Ron Barry had his education at Crescent College, and at the age of 16 graduated from the ponies he rode at home to the thoroughbreds at the Palmerstown stables of Mrs. Anne Brewster in Kill, Co. Kildare, where Tommy Shaw was the trainer.

And it was trainer Shaw who saddled Ron's first winner at Gowran Park on May 18, 1961, when, riding at 8 st. 8 lbs., Barry forced Livvia up to beat the Paddy Powell-ridden Last Count by less than a length in the Ballyhale Handicap. That was a big day in the life of the 7 lbs. claiming apprentice, but just about the last thing Ron would like to do today would be 'make' 8 st. 8 lbs. to ride even

a champion. Now 'doing' 10 st. 5 lbs., Ron left Kill and Ireland after five years, and in 1969 arrived at the stables of Commander "Bill" Crawford, south of Edinbarah, and spent two years at that Scottish location before moving on to his current retaining stable of Gordon W. Richards at Greystoke, Penrith, in Cumberland, and it is from "The Stables" of trainer Richards that the winners have principally flowed.

First success

Ron's first success in Britain came at Scotland's well-appointed Ayr racecourse in 1964, when Pinal Approach carried the Col. Limerickman to victory, but it can be said that champion National Hunt rider, Barry, need not rely on winners to maintain his popularity on the English racing scene. His rise to the top rung of

racing's difficult ladder has been gradual and has been accomplished in the smooth and pleasing fashion which one would expect from this quiet-spoken man. Ron retains his quick turn of humour and there is positively no hint in his accent which would suggest that he has been out of this country for almost ten years.

Being popular with backers is one thing; having the respect of his fellow riders is another and more important factor, and this Ron can claim in abundance.

Unaffected

There could scarcely be a less unaffected champion than Ron Barry, and I recall his introduction to a member of Britain's royal family, after winning the Gold Cup at Cheltenham when his embarrassed smile and refreshing humour brought a

spontaneous burst of applause from the huge crowd assembled at the unsaddling enclosure.

And, of course, that victory on The Dikler in the Gold Cup was one of the highlights in a season that will long be remembered by this man from Raheen who had to pull out all the stops to collect chasing's championship for the Fulke Walwyn stable at the expense of Bend Sin.

Ron intends to take up training in due course, but the switch in categories is not imminent. With luck, we will have the pleasure of seeing him collect another few jockey titles before taking on the responsibilities of stable management, but almost certainly we will have the opportunity of seeing him in action at Killarney later this year when he attends the three-day July meeting.

Meanwhile, one of Ireland's best-loved sporting ambassadors to Britain can enjoy his holidays in Corfu and Raheen.



Ron Barry in action . . . taking a fence on Pinal Approach at Wetherby. Irish crowds will have the opportunity of seeing Britain's new record breaker in action at Killarney this summer.

County Round-up by "Camán":

Annihilated by Tipperary

Under 21 hurlers must have matches

Our football league suffered another nasty jolt at Pairc na nUachtaráin last Sunday evening, when we were literally annihilated by Tipperary to the tune of 4-13 to 1-7.

Luckily we had the benefit of the strong breeze in the opening half, which helped us keep on fair terms with the opposition until just the half-line whistle, when Tipperary pegged home their first goal, to lead 1-1 to 1-4.

It was almost all one-way traffic on the turnaround and the visitors rumped about almost as they pleased. They gave our lads lessons on how to play constructive football. Their kicking was far superior to ours, and their sense of position streets ahead of our efforts in this regard. Too often our lads were behind their men and out of position, and the overall impression was that we were out of our class.

without several games in company they are living in cuckoo land and do not deserve to be in charge of any team.

The same applies to our minor hurlers. We saw how inadequate they proved in last year's Munster Final, and if we are not to have a reputation of that we must have all our activity on this front instantly the examinations are over and that will be very shortly now.

We have a great opportunity of landing three Munster titles in hurling if only we could rouse those in control to the urgency of the situation, and the absolute necessity of adequate preparation with particular emphasis on match practice.

TABLE TENNIS

... with best

DIARY OF COMING G.A.A. EVENTS:

Limerick and Cork meet at Castlelyons

Interesting team chosen

BY "CAMAN"

FRIDAY, JUNE 8

The main attraction this evening (8.00) is the meeting of Monaleen and Mungret at Pairc na nUachtaráin in the City Senior Hurling Championship. They were both beaten in the opening round, Monaleen by Old Christians, Mungret by Patrickswell, but the existence of a second chance meant that the urgency about winning was not there to the same degree as now, when the chips are really down and defeat means elimination from the championship title.

Monaleen were very much in the championship limelight when they won both the 1971 city and county Junior Hurling Championship crowns. The previous

not all that satisfying and some would want to considerably shake a leg, to justify their place on a championship fifteen. Our line-out for the Castlelyons management gives some indication of the direction in which the selectors' minds are travelling for the championship. One good feature seems to be the effort to put a strong back-line in the side for strength in the middle is all important. After that, a 20 will depend on how the half-wingers fare. Many will be watching with critical eyes how Eamonn Crehan and Jack O'Dwyer fit into the centre line of defence, whilst equally important will be the performance of Bernie Hurley and John O'Connell.

1966, they won the city under-21 hurling title, and they have a quartette (1965, 1967, 1970 and 1971) of juvenile hurling successes to their credit. They added County Minor honours to these in 1966, besides winning the four county juvenile crowns for 1965, 1967, 1970, and 1972.

This is a remarkable and enviable background and the big question mark must be why Old Christians has not long since smashed the senior barrier. Other clubs with a lot less material from which to build have hit the hurling headlines in the county and Old Christians must feel that their turn is overdue.

They certainly had a dream start to this year's title fight, and a 3-13 to 1-1 win over Monaleen was something to crow about. In that game, Matt Ruth staked his claim to a place on the county team, with seven beautifully worked points, and others to shine on what

Pat Fogarty who scored 3-5 was the chief architect of Claughaun's downfall, but it was by no means a one-man show, and in Tom and Noel Ryan, Jim Byrnes, Peter Carroll, Seamus Coughlan, Charlie McCarthy, Mick Fogarty, Jimmy Cross and Willie O'Brien, Ballybrown have other lads fit to rank with the best 'bummen' anywhere.

SECOND GAME

In the second game at head-quarters (3.45) we have the City Senior Hurling Championship semi-final, which brings St. Patrick's and Patrickswell into contention. The latter are, of course, the holders and with their big record in under 21 ranks to back them, few can blame their supporters for the absolute confidence they feel in the ability of the side to hold their crown and even improve on that performance by winning back county renown. It was a big blow to local pride when

RACING BY BOB KELLY

Another Oaks for Vincent O'Brien?

Where You Lead has the credentials

Vincent O'Brien looks for his third Epsom Oaks winner on Saturday when Lester Piggott sits up on "Where You Lead". Eight years ago, Australian Jack Partell, helped to credit the Ballydoolee trainer with his

... with best ...