

Revive Memories of a Great Clare Sportsman

# RALPH WESTROPP WAS ACCLAIMED THE WORLD'S BEST COURSING JUDGE

This month's great coursing carnivals at Powerstown Park and Clounanna stir memories of Ralph Westropp, a man who was acclaimed by his contemporaries as the world's best judge of a buckle and, indeed, one of the greatest all-round sportsman of his century. One of his most spectacular and colourful feats was his leap from the second floor of the County Club in O'Connell Street, Limerick, clearing in the drop the massive porch which at that time extended over half-way across the foot-path.

## Judge

As a coursing judge, Westropp reigned supreme and unchallenged in Ireland, and it was conceded that never, perhaps, in the history of the sport

had there been his equal. He was himself a public courser and owned many celebrated greyhounds.

He first entertained the idea of becoming a judge some time about the year 1858. He thoroughly understood the sport in theory and practice and his sound judgment, aided by strict impartiality, soon brought him into public notice.

He quickly climbed the ladder of fame and up to about the year 1868 he held a position second to none in Ireland and abroad as a coursing judge.

His great talents soon won him fame in Britain and at one time in his career Westropp judged nearly as many meetings in England as he did in Ireland. Allied to these natural qualities was his superb horsemanship.

Rarely, indeed, were even his closest decisions questioned, but when they were his powers of photographic description could re-live a course, as he seldom failed in convincing the vanquished as well as the victorious as to the correctness of his judgments.

After having officiated as a judge in Lurgan, Southport and nearly all the important meetings in Ireland and cross-Channel, he retired from coursing to spend the last years of his life amongst his tenants, by whom he was idolised in Limerick and Clare.

## All-Rounder

Early in life he served in the 57th Regiment and during his military, as in his subsequent, career, he endeared himself to his brother officers by a suavity of manner and kindness of heart rarely combined in one individual.

His prowess as an all-round sportsman was not exaggerated. A sporting contemporary said of him—"He was a man in a thousand and his light, but athletic frame would never lead to the discovery of his almost Herculean powers, and he had feet that a princess might well be proud of."

"He was a crack horseman and a rare judge of coursing; at running, jumping, racquets and billiards he had few equals, and he could cast a fly or kill a snipe with any man."

## Wager

At one time Westropp's brother officers of the 57th Regiment offered to back him for £5,000 against any other officer to be the best all-round man at field sports in the service.

The challenge was never taken up. And little wonder—he once, on grass, jumped clean over a pair of horses which were harnessed to a carriage.

But perhaps his greatest feat was his jumping out of the second - storey window of the

County Club in Limerick and clearing the porch over the door in the attempt.

His death came very sudden and unexpected at his home, St. Catherine's, in Bodyke, County Clare, in the spring of 1876. He was in the prime of life and had not completed his 46th year. But the reputation built on his great qualities of sportsmanship lives on as a memorial worthy of the man.

Mr. Brendan O'Connell has the Irish Cup meet

Clounanna for very second best record venue. He recently at Clonmel.



of the famous litter by Merry Newdown ex Tender Heart which last year, Derby and Irish Cup in the one season. A couple of the famous litter Irish Cup to the formidable list of successes for the Hayes's.



Getting ready for slips.

They rode to win

## Don John



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good it feels  
ow your £100

## Church