

## SEMLEY HORSE RACES 1878



The races annually held at Semley Dairy are gaining popularity, and the attendance increases each succeeding year. On Monday morning, visitors arrived in large numbers by rail, whilst the roads – the dust of which the rain of the previous night had happily laid - were thronged with the cosy and commodious, if not always the most fashionable, equipages of the farmers and country tradesmen. There was a fair sprinkling of the softer sex, chiefly of the humble kind - the wives and daughters of the working population of the surrounding towns and villages - who made no scruple of exhibiting a personal interest in the numerous events.

Possibly during the afternoon there were 3,000 persons in the field. There were sights enough and to spare, and certainly enough and to spare of sounds; and the scene presented reminded one of a country fair. Here and there stationary groups were gathered round some philanthropists who were incessantly presenting silver and coppers to the crowd in exchange for money of less value; but those who watched the proceedings throughout soon learned how these individuals made the game pay. The proprietors of "knock-'em-downs", "American indicators", and shooting-galleries, appeared to be quite embarrassed with the press of customers. Ample provisions had been made for refreshing the "inner man", and a capital luncheon was provided. The Stour Band was in attendance, and played vigorously during the day. The weather in the morning was fine, but there were slight showers during the afternoon.

The arrangements on the course were admirable. A first rate grandstand had been erected and the course was well kept. A number of betting men, principally from Bristol, were present, and appeared to do a good business. The following were the committee: Messrs W Pike, T Baker, A Bracher, E Bristol, W Kirby, Harrison, and H King; starter Mr Walter Genge, clerk of the scales Mr J Alford, clerks of the course Mr R Campbell, Mr H Imber and Mr Davis, judge Mr W T Buckland. The following are the results of the racing:



Semley Cup, value £15. Heats. For ponies, 13 hands 2 inches. Distance, twice round the course. Catch weights. There were nine entries, but the running lay between the following:

Mr Porter's Flirt	1	-	1
Mr King's Tommy	2	-	0
Mr Penney's Tommy	0	-	2
Mr Laidlaw's Butterfly	3	-	3

Flirt had the race well in hand from the first, and won easily. In the second heat, Flirt again led and came in several lengths ahead of Mr Penney's Tommy, Butterfly being third. Mr King's Tommy did not run in the second heat.

Farmers' Plate, value £15. Heats. For horses being four months, the property of owners residing within 10 miles of Semley Station. Distance, twice round the course. Five started.

Mr S Young's Kisber	1	-	1
Mr Long's Bazaine	2	-	2
Mr P Genge's Dorothy	3	-	3

The horses started well together, but Kisber soon showed to the front, being closely pressed by Bazaine and Dorothy. The others were never in the race. Kisber won by several lengths; the same distance between Bazaine and Dorothy.

Trotting Race, value £10. Heats. Open to all comers. Distance, three times round the course. Ponies under 13 hands to receive 200 yards; under 14 hands to receive 100 yards start. Catch weights. Five started.

Mr Rebbeck's Tommy	1	-	1
Mr Long's Lucy	2	-	2
Mr Lanning's Minnie	3	-	0

The race was easily won by Tommy, who came in 30 yards in front of Lucy. In the second heat, four started. Tommy, after passing the other horses, gradually increased the lead, and came in the winner by a dozen lengths.

South Wilts, East Dorset and Blackmore Vale Hunt Cup, value £15. Heats. Distance, twice round the course, over six flights of hurdles and two water jumps. Four years, 10 stone; five and aged, 11 stone. Thoroughbreds, 12 stone. Six started.

Mr Allen's Berwick	1	-	1
Mr Bedford's Merry Bells	2	-	0
Mr Young's Kisber	3	-	0
Mr Wanhill's Dutchman	0	-	2
Mr Butler's Lady Alice	0	-	3

This was a capital race. In the first heat, the horses started well together. Lady Alice shot ahead, but refused the water jump and ran underneath a bar, which divided the courses, throwing her rider, who was not, however, injured. Berwick now made the running being closely pressed by Merry Bells and Kisber. She, however, maintained the lead and came in the winner by about a length. Kisber was a good third, the others were nowhere. The second heat was well contested. Berwick led the whole distance, Dutchman pressing her hard and Merry Bells and Kisber in close attendance. The finish was most exciting, Berwick being but a neck ahead of Dutchman; six lengths between Dutchman and Lady Alice.

Galloway Race, value £10. Heats. Open to all comers. Not exceeding 14 hands 2 inches. Distance, twice round the course.  
Catch weights. Six started.

Mr Porter's Little Annie	1	2	1
Mr Flower's Wardour	2	3	0
Mr Kirby's Patchwork	3	0	0
Mr Imber's Janette	0	1	0

Little Annie was the favourite. Patchwork led for some distance, but was overhauled by Little Annie and Wardour, the former winning easily. In the second heat, Wardour commenced kicking, and thus lost all chance of being "placed". Little Annie had the race well in hand, when suddenly Janette passed her, and came in first by a dozen lengths. The majority of those who had witnessed the race appeared to think that Mr Porter had purposely held in Little Annie and he was hissed on passing the grandstand. It subsequently transpired, however, that he had broken his saddle. In the final heat, Little Annie won anyhow.

There were also various athletic sports, the following being the results of the events:

Mile Race, for silver watch.

Mr Woodford of London was the winner, Mr Gatehouse of Ludwell, the only other competitor, being about two yards behind.

100 yards Flat Race, for silver watch. 1<sup>st</sup> Keen, Crewkerne, 2<sup>nd</sup> Harrison

150 yards Hurdle Race, for silver watch. 1<sup>st</sup> Keen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Woodford

Bicycle Race (handicap). 1<sup>st</sup> silver watch, 2<sup>nd</sup> 10s.

There were 12 entries. The first price was won by Mr W Goddard, who was allowed 100 yards; the second by Mr T Style of Yeovil (scratch).

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