

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Rodney Masters catches up with jockey-turned-electrician **Mark Bradburne**

Business is booming for bright spark

WHEN the recession was biting at its deepest it was said if a change of trade was necessary it would be prudent to opt for one of the four most resilient professions: plumber, electrician, hairdresser or funeral director.

Mark Bradburne decided to become an electrician, and his work diary has not seen a blank day. For many in the Lambourn Valley and beyond the former jump jockey is the go-to sparkie. His contracts include wiring a hot tub for Charlie Mann, a barn conversion for Clive Cox and a new property for Pat Murphy.

"I've worked for most trainers in the Lambourn area and I regard myself as most fortunate the racing community embraced me twice over, first as a jockey, now electrician," says Bradburne.

When initially seeking guidance about a second career while still busily engaged as a jockey, he admits he had no idea what employment might await.

"I had a meeting with Lisa Delany of Jets [Jockeys Employment & Training Scheme] and after half an hour we came up with this.



Name Mark Bradburne **Age** 37
When at large 1992-2011
High point Two Cheltenham Festival winners and the Grade 1 Ascot Chase
Low point "Injuries, I suppose, but I didn't really have a low point"

"I'd messed around with plugs, wires and transformers as a kid, but knowing what I know now it's a miracle I didn't kill myself.

"I started my training while I was riding and had more time to learn while sidelined with a broken back, and again during the quieter times in the summer."

Bradburne is also a jockey coach, with Jake Greenall among those under his wing, and he does

part-time work for BBC Sport.

"I was at Aintree for them and the odd thing was I found the drive quite tiring. Yet in my riding days I'd think nothing of going to Musselburgh for one ride.

"I was clocking 70,000 to 80,000 miles a year in my car and when I went north most jockeys jumped in with me – they'd call it Bradburne's bus.

"Nowadays I doubt I'd do 20,000 miles, but I'm happy to travel as far as needs be for a decent job. I may have a contract soon for some work in London. My most rewarding job so far would be the wiring and lighting in Clive Cox's barn conversion in East Garston. Clive is renowned for his attention to detail and it's a marvellous place.

"Today I was doing some work for my brother-in-law [Marcus Armytage]; he always pays on time. I've been fortunate as that has invariably been the case with my other racing clients."

Bradburne's business is expanding, and within that he sees an opportunity for some of his former colleagues, again via Jets.

"I'd like to see some of the lads come along for work experience during the summer to see if this profession could be a suitable second career. I'm blessed in that I've had two careers in which I've always looked forward to going to work."

I GOTTA HORSE

John King speaks to Graham Dench about his much-improved jumper Ratify

A revelation after spell on the farm

Horse Ratify **Wins** 5

Owner John King

Racing highlight Ratify's return to good health and four subsequent wins

RATIFY was one of the unsung success stories of the last jumps season.

A problem horse who was pretty much written off at the end of the 2012-13 season, he thrived when turned out on owner John King's farm near Gloucester last summer and, switched to Ebbw Vale trainer Dai Burchell, never looked back. He improved around 35lb according to official ratings, winning 2m4f handicap chases at Towcester, Huntingdon, Wincanton and Chepstow on the way, ridden each time by conditional Robbie Dunne.

Although it is only in the last few seasons that King has become more seriously involved, his family has always dabbled in racehorses. His late father Percy had plenty of winners with the likes of Bob Turnell and George Todd, among them good hurdler Nosey and Whaddon Hero.

In addition Tim Hamey, who won the 1926 Cheltenham Gold Cup on Koko and the 1932 Grand National on Forbra, trained for a while on the



Connections of Ratify after the horse's Towcester win last November

farm, and was still part of the set-up when King was growing up.

At the start of last season, King understandably had no real expectations of Ratify and the horse he was excited by was King Spirit, who earned a rating of 130 after winning at Uttoxeter last May.

King says: "Unfortunately King Spirit only ran once in the winter and got a leg, but Ratify, who had lost his way after winning at Hereford three years ago, has been unbelievable.

"There had always been something wrong with Ratify, so I had him back at home for the summer and turned him out.

"We'd been advised to go point-to-pointing with him, but after my son Philip had fed him and built him up again at home I approached Dai Burchell to see if he wanted to try him, and Dai liked him straight away and said he couldn't find anything the matter.

"The combination of Dai Burchell, Robbie Dunne and getting his health back has seen him improve and improve. He was on 86 at the start of the season and he's now in the 120s. He had a good gap before he won at Huntingdon, as Dai's gallops had been washed away, but that was no bad thing because Dai said he needed a rest as he never stops trying and puts such a lot into his racing."

It will clearly be tougher for Ratify off his new mark, but King remains hopeful there's still a little bit more to come.

He says: "I thought the handicapper might be catching up with him, as he looked beaten going to the last at Chepstow, but he kept on finding and Robbie said he'd be better going back right-handed. Dai has his eye now on a 0-130 chase at Cartmel, and although that means going left-handed again he might not be finished yet."



Grace Green: blissfully content with 14-hour day spent with racehorses

YOUNG GUNS

In our series on people taking their initial steps in the racing industry, **Grace Green** talks to Rodney Masters

SO FLUENT in French that most assume she is French, and with a penchant for mathematics, Grace Green could easily be earning a fat wage and living the high life in London or Paris. But for now she is blissfully content with her 14-hour day spent with racehorses, both present and retired, in the Lambourn Valley.

Within and beyond Harry Dunlop's stable, she has established a reputation for being able to sit tight on even the most difficult ones. Such is her enthusiasm and reliability that Dunlop recently promoted her to deputise for head groom Phil Wright on his weekends off.

When Green moved, reluctantly, to France at the age of 12 from the Bristol suburb of Downend, her only experience of riding was on a beach donkey at Weston-super-Mare. She laughs now at her initial misgivings about moving to Brittany with her mother Angela, because within a few weeks her career path was indelibly mapped out.

"Every house in that part of Brittany seemed to have masses of land and everyone had at least one horse," she says. "I competed in showjumping and dressage competitions and did all right. By then I was hooked and knew exactly what I wanted to do in life.

"As soon as I was old enough I enrolled at an equestrian college. Part of the programme included work experience at a pre-training stable and one morning I rode a friend's horse on the track at Senonnes, which is a training centre but no more than a hamlet. The faster the horse went the more I enjoyed it."

At the age of 18 she returned to

Love affair started by French stay

Name Grace Green **Age** 22

Job Work-rider/groom for Harry Dunlop

Best moment Returning to France with Christina Dunlop to lead up Encore Encore at Chantilly

Britain and landed a job in Lambourn with Cheltenham Gold Cup-winning trainer Noel Chance. When he started to ease down to retirement she joined Dunlop.

Green is in the yard at 5.15am and when her duties there are complete at midday she rides out Coco, a pony owned by the Parker family, who are Dunlop's landlords at Windsor House Stables. Then, before and after evening stables, she will ride out and tend to the needs of her own horse, Lough Corrib, a 15-race maiden for Kevin Ryan and Alastair Lidderdale. He became so difficult to handle the owner gave him to her.

Green's ability to speak French has been an asset to Dunlop when travelling French-bred horses back to their native land to earn lucrative breeding premiums and she loves her life. "There's a great spirit about the yard and you couldn't ask to work with a nicer or more caring family," she says.

Q&A 'It's a joy to see the horses thrive on the care they get'

What is the best bit about being in racing? The five-star care given to the horses; they have the best of everything and it's a joy to see them thrive on it.

And the worst? Getting up before 5am and having only one and a half days off a fortnight. It's not great, but we accept it as part and parcel of the job.

What are your ambitions? Eventually I'll train as an accountant and start my own business to do the books for trainers or whoever in racing wants to employ me, but I'll always ride out. Hopefully one day I'll be in a position to have a horse in training with Harry.

What can racing do to attract more youngsters to the sport? That aspect has improved vastly and the racing schools do a good job. I'm not sure there's much more that can be done.