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# ANOTHER SUNDAY WORLD EXCLUSIVE



TUDORS: Fergal Donohue, Colm Smith, Lorraine Earley, Pat Brophy, David Hankon, Enda Hallahan, Martin Shannon, Robert Hennessy, Gerakline, Niall Glennon and Gerry Lambe

# THE BET SET

## Syndicates take over from toffs as Ireland expects winning week



HOPES: No One Tells Me in racing action

CHEERS: Charlie

WINNER ALL RIGHT: No One Tells Me

IT'S called the Sport of Kings – but the owners' enclosure at Cheltenham this week belongs to the ordinary punter.

Instead of toasting their win with champers these lads will be saying 'cheers' with beers.

Drinking buddies all over the country are banding together to form racing syndicates – and they don't need to be zillionaires to see their horses romp across the turf.

All a racehorse owner needs these days is a few friends willing to chip in and a nice pub where all can study the form together.

The Tudor Inn in Blessington, Co Wicklow, and the Judge's Inn in nearby Baltinglass were abuzz this weekend as the patrons of both pubs got ready for Cheltenham.

The Tudor's owner Colm Smith and the Judge's Enda Hallahan will be joining their punters for the ride of their life as they put



TUNE: Racing stars sing Cheltenham

BY GERALDINE COMISKEY

their faith in a mare called No One Tells Me.

They may be ready to take on the big boys of racing, but the 11-strong Lakeside Syndicate is about as racy as cult 70s pop group the Village People, with members including a builder, a plasterer, an accountant and a pub manager.

The syndicate, which was set up 10 years ago, is one of the oldest in the country.

"We bought a few horses over the last nine or ten years but none were as good," founder Martin Shannon told the Sunday

World. "We had one that didn't work out too well at all." But No One Tells Me has won three major races in the three years they've had her – at Galway, Wexford and Punchestown.

### Trainer

At two grand a month for training fees and sundry running costs, owning a racehorse is not cheap even spread out among 11 buddies, but Martin says No One Tells Me has "earned her keep".

He knew the five-year-old bay mare would be a good bet when he saw her in trainer Jessica Harrington's stable, and immedi-

ately bought her "for a song" off Jessica's husband Johnny.

Jessica continues to train the mare but the lads will be putting all their trust in the hands of jockey Robbie Power this week as the mare makes her debut in England.

Accountant Gerry Lambe joked this week: "If we win, you won't see me for dust. I'll be off – with the money!"

The only girl in the group, The Tudor Inn's manager Lorraine Early, will have an extra reason for going to Cheltenham. "I'm looking forward to Ladies' Day," she confesses.

Another syndicate hoping for success at the mecca of National Hunt racing is headed up by West Cork drinking buddies Pat McSweeney and Gerry Quinn. They nearly got rid of their Cheltenham hopeful Dorset Square.

The horse wasn't doing well to start, according to Pat. "I took him up to [Carlow trainer] Willie Mullins and he said 'Mr McSweeney, you're wasting your time'. But we insisted he train him. The horse began to improve and now he's flying."

Businessman Pat, from Manch, West Cork, and his accountant Gerry hit on the idea of buying a racehorse over a pint.

"I said to Gerry: 'D'you know what – we'll buy an aul' horse'. He thought it was a great idea."

Another syndicate, which has already tasted success at the famous English venue is headed up by Dublin publican Charlie Chawke. Charlie and his mates are hedging their bets this year – with two horses in the race.

### Stablemate

Their horse, Forpadydeplasterer, won at Cheltenham last year, and they're hoping some of that need for speed will rub off on his new stablemate, Mon Amix.

Meanwhile the real Paddy the Plasterer might bet a few quid on a horse called Donna's Palm.

The nag is owned by a Leinster House syndicate, whose members include Taoiseach Brian Cowen, party colleague GV Wright and Fine Gael's Sean Barrett.

They may be may be foes in the Dail but next week they'll all be backing the one horse.