



Dream ride: after Saturday's Haydock Sprint Cup victory aboard Dream Ahead

someone is an idiot but five minutes later it doesn't matter. We are all trying to beat each other but there is huge respect there. And if for some reason you aren't in the weighing room for a few days then you miss it like anything.

"But I am in a good position as I don't have a family to support. Some of the lads are finding it a struggle and if prize-money declines much more there could be some good jockeys heading abroad to the Far East or America. In Britain we have the best racing, the nicest tracks, the highest-quality weighing room and the finest trainers – everything about our racing is top-class except the prize-money."

It's a rare moan from a man mature beyond his years. An increasingly able communicator with good words at his disposal, Buick is hugely talented but nicely grounded with it and racing's glittering prizes await him.

One day he will be champion and in time he will forge a reputation as the pre-eminent big-race jockey of his generation. And with a back-up team foursquare and rock-solid behind him you can't ever see the temptations of life's wild side getting a look-in.

With any sort of fair wind, Buick is going to play an ever more prominent part in the make and shape of the Flat for a long time to come.

Buick on . . .

►►Norway

I SPENT my childhood in Norway and came over here when I was 16. Norway was a great place to grow up and despite July's horrific events it has always been safe with a very free and open society. It is also stunningly beautiful.

But the winters are hard and long and in the depths of winter it isn't light until nine and it can be dark again by half-past three. Quite a lot of people get depressed by it and the cold and the snow make things hard work – everything seems to take twice as long to do.

Obviously recent events have scarred the country but Norwegians are very tough and they always stick together – just look at the way a small country like them stood up to the Germans in the war.

►►The Baldings

EVERYTHING at Kingsclere is quality and the Baldings are renowned for giving young jockeys a chance.

There was plenty of competition with other lads when I was there, which was good because that means you have to learn quickly. It makes you tough without breaking your

heart and that isn't an easy balance to strike.

Above all they place great faith in you. When I lost my claim – which can be a very difficult time – Andrew still kept putting me up and that is a huge boost to your confidence.

►►Masked Marvel (below)

He beat Namibian really well at Goodwood in May and ran more than okay when eighth in the Derby.

Jimmy Fortune rode him when he won the Bahrain Trophy at the July meeting and he was forced to make the running on him. He's much better with something to aim at but there was nothing wrong with beating Census a head.

He has been working well and the one thing we are sure of is that he will stay the Leger trip 100 per cent.



LAMBOURN LIFE

Rodney Masters



WITH the diplomatic competence of Oliver Sherwood more akin to Kofi Annan than Neville Chamberlain, it would appear a truce has been called in the verbal 'War of the Racing Valleys' after no more than a skirmish.

In the heat of the moment, one Lambourn man had been so furious at a comment from fellow trainer Tim Vaughan about "Lambourn being cluttered with trainers" he sounded in a mood to station snipers on towers at the Severn bridges.

He had telephoned me before first lot. "We'll see where Tim Vaughan stands in the trainers' championship come Christmas," he stormed. "And tell Vaughan he should have a look at the results of the Cheltenham Gold Cup and Champion Hurdle, where Lambourn winners totally outnumber those from Wales. In fact, apart from a fluke win with Norton's Coin I don't believe they've had too many."

I reminded him there was no advantage in belittling Norton's Coin's 100-1 win as a fluke because that was not the case and his view would be condemned as unreasonable, and not only within Wales.

He responded, justifiably, that Vaughan's comment about Lambourn was untrue and therefore equally unreasonable.

The spat had erupted when Vaughan, asked by a Racing Post reporter to explain the impressive late summer rush of winners from his stables at Aberthin in the Vale of Glamorgan, stated that he thought it had something to do with "not being in an environment cluttered with trainers, like in Lambourn".

Sherwood concedes that he, too, was seething. So much so, it prompted him to open a Twitter account for no other reason than a means to send an instant reply to Vaughan.

Sherwood said yesterday: "I don't usually do anger, but I said that his remark about being cluttered was totally untrue. I reminded him that Lambourn had recorded considerably more winners than Wales over the past 25 years."

Last week, in what was never going to be a remake of High Noon, Sherwood and Vaughan came face to face in the paddock at Hereford.

After a brief oral exchange, conciliation rather than gunsmoke filled the air because phrases were used such as "slip of the tongue" and "half joking".

It was not recorded as to whether Sherwood arrived back in Lambourn waving a piece of paper proclaiming peace in our time. There is nothing like uniting the genial folk of Lambourn than an attack from beyond.

►►Lodge is an all-action girl

ONE of the most genial characters I've interviewed of late is action girl Jessie Lodge, who has a degree in international relations and is therefore qualified to join Sherwood's diplomatic corp.

Lodge has put her career in the film industry on hold while she attempts to make inroads as an amateur jockey over jumps.

Russell, her father, was a

A truce is called in valleys' war of words

production/location director for the Harry Potter series and is now engaged on the new James Bond movie.

Many readers will remember Lodge for a story that hit the national newspaper headlines six months ago.

She rode Lupita, the Exeter winner that clinched a £1.45 million Tote jackpot for heating engineer Steve Whiteley, who had invested £2.

It changed his life, but not hers. As a thank-you, Whiteley sent her a bouquet, now wilted, and champagne, now drunk.

Several jockeys in a similar position would have awaited a fat cheque in the post, but there was no such expectation from Lodge, 25, who was grateful enough to have nailed that elusive first winner under rules after around two dozen attempts.

Like so many over the generations, she came to Lambourn from the point-to-point circuit, hoping to make an impact as a jockey, though, unlike most, her thoughts are far from one-dimensional.

Always in pursuit of an adrenalin rush, she spent sometime at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

She says: "I had an opportunity to return to training with the army just recently following an injury, but in the end I decided that life wasn't for me."

"It wasn't for fear of being posted to a war zone or anything like that. I've no regret at making my decision, I did learn a lot about life while at Sandhurst."

She could cut a living as skiing instructor but at the moment she is a full-time employee at Warren Greatrex's stable.

Slowly, she is getting there in her chosen career – she had a ride at Newton Abbot on Monday and another at Sedgefield on Tuesday.

"People may say I'm an action girl, but the reality is that I like to think I'm living my life to the full," she says.

"In Lambourn it is very easy for racing to become all encompassing, but I never lose sight of what's outside that bubble."

Having ridden out for Ian Williams and Henrietta Knight while at university, she came to Lambourn in 2006 intending to stay for one season.

She recalls: "I broke my collarbone and decided to give it another year, then I broke my left wrist and decided to give it another year, then the right wrist persuaded me to . . ."