

NEW FACES AROUND THE PLACE

**Aaron Sweeney**

Aaron was born in County Cork in Ireland and has always had a passion to ride horses. With his mother and sister keen horsewomen and being born in a country known for horse breeding, training and racing this set him on his way.

In 1999 Aaron joined the 'Racing Academy and Centre for Education (RACE) a training school for horse-racing jockeys located on the lands of the Irish National Stud — a thoroughbred horse breeding facility in Tully County Kildare. The Trainee Jockey Course is a foundation course in race riding and stable work, a residential 42 week program where students typically go on to either jockey apprenticeships or stable work after completing the course. Like many others, Aaron found horse racing very competitive in Ireland and so he looked to further pastures and found himself in Australia.

Aaron began his career in Australia in 2011 as an amateur jockey, three seasons and at the end of 2014 he became a professional jockey with two years to go before he completes his apprenticeship. Aaron has travelled vast areas of Australia particularly Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales and worked with a number of trainers, he is currently working with Braidwood trainer Aaron Clarke.

"Aaron Sweeney is one of the most promising and up and coming NSW apprentices in Australia. Sweeney has already carved out a great career as a well-respected picnic jockey and has been training with all his might in the saddle to become a fully-fledged jockey starting as an apprentice. His willingness and desire to want to achieve top level status was the most attractive feature to Caviar Bloodstock (quote Caviarbloodstock website 2016)".

Aaron is able to turn his talents to other ventures, not only success with horse racing but also camel riding. Some say



ELLEN AT THE BAR WITH HAPPY CUSTOMERS.

Ellen Maura Hennessy

Whilst her smile says it all, if you look into Ellen's blue eyes and hear her sweet Irish brogue you feel impelled to listen to her. Ellen has been riding horses she thinks as far back as when she first learnt to walk. Brought up in County Kildare, the centre of the Irish horse industry with more stud farms than any other county, it is no wonder she has become an apprentice jockey.

At age 16 Ellen decided to take a gap year from her education and attended the Racing Academy and Centre for Education (RACE) in her county. To date she considers this the best year of her life, and from there she expanded to

work placements. She has had 10 rides in Ireland with one winner.

A working holiday to Australia (on the bucket list for many Irish youth) she arrived in Melbourne and spent three months there, travelling and working at John Sadler Racing.

Ellen then moved up to Sydney for four months with Chris Waller in the modern stable complex Australian Turf Club, Rosehill Gardens. Whilst she enjoyed life in both cities and the experience she gained at both stables, it was the countryside which she missed. She craved the lifestyle and friendship of country people and sure it is not as green as Ireland, but Braidwood was the place to be.

Ellen works for Aaron Clarke, seven days a week at the

by Margaret Tuckwell

that riding a camel is about as comfortable as riding a bike without a seat! The Boulia Cup (final being 1500m), often referred to as the Melbourne Cup of camel racing, was won by Aaron in 2014, riding Hookem Up. As part of his fitness campaign Aaron plays competition squash, lawn bowls, swimming and boxing. In August this year Aaron competed in a charity boxing match for Multiple Sclerosis as a Super Fly Weight, which he won, this was held in the city of Cork.

Aaron became an Australian citizen this year and like many migrants from Ireland is chasing dreams, his major dream being to work his way to ride in a Melbourne Cup. 'All of my dreams so far have been successful' say Aaron so we wish him well for the future.

When asked does he enjoy living in Braidwood, Aaron's response was 'Braidwood is a town with very friendly people, with families similar to Ireland and Braidwood reminds him of Irish towns. He had heard many stories back home about people migrating to Australia from as far back as the Potato Famine, and more recently with young Irish people looking for work, travel and adventure, it seems the place to go and truly enjoy.'

Racing in Ireland

Of the 26 counties in Ireland there are 19 counties registered with 192 jockeys. Ireland boasts 26 major race courses, more per head of population than any other country with more than 350 race meetings and 2,000 races annually. Irish race courses are visited by over 1.3 million people every year. (source goracingireland)



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Christmas safety for your pet

Whilst Christmas is generally a much celebrated time in our homes, it can also be one of the most dangerous times for your pet.

Decorations such as tinsel, ribbon, plastic and bows can be easily chewed or swallowed, causing lacerations in their mouths, or obstructions within their intestines, resulting in the need for emergency surgery. All electrical decorations, such as lights, should also be used with caution, especially if you have pets that chew, such as rabbits.

Christmas plants and flowers are also toxic, especially mistletoe, poinsettias, holly, pine needles and all parts of lily species (leaves, stem, petals, stamens and pollen).

It is also a good idea to avoid sharing your Christmas dinner with your pet as some foods cause toxicities and can be fatal. Left over bones can cause damage to teeth, gums or the intestines if they are swallowed. High-fat meals can cause pancreatitis, a very painful and potentially fatal illness.

Foods such as Christmas pudding, currants, grapes, raisins, plums, peaches, caffeine, onions, garlic, macadamia nuts and lollies can all be toxic, as well as sugar-free sweet products as they contain xylitol.

As the summer heat increases, you should also consider your pet's sun safety. Avoid the sun, which can cause sunburn, as well as heat stroke, which can occur to your pet even if it is sitting quietly in the shade. Ideas to help keep your pet cool include clipping excess hair off to allow cooling, a fresh cool drinking source, areas with shade with a cool breeze and reduced activities during the day to reduce the chance of heat stroke. Some pets may even enjoy a large block of ice that they can lick.

Visitors to your house can also cause your pet stress. The use of pheromones leading up to and during Christmas, such as Feliway® or Adaptil®, can help alleviate or prevent stress and fear — and are also great to use in summer to reduce the fear of thunderstorms in dogs.