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The Race Horse And Its Speculators; The Cash And Thrill

Few would gainsay that betting is deep-rooted in Brit life, a passion pursued at all levels of society from the bingo hall to the bridge parlour but , of course, especially linked with horse racing. However, notwithstanding, or perhaps due to its extensive nature, betting has its critics. It is sometimes attacked as a needless malevolent, as an immoral and unproductive activity seducing its protagonists into over the top involvement and tantalizing them into crime and corruption. Admittedly the relatively tax—free rewards of gambling have attracted a criminal component, and undoubtedly addiction to the level of Dostoevsky's 'hero ', masochistically losing his cash, his outlays a preface to orgasm, is a clear manifestation of sickness.

Most gamblers nevertheless , are a long way from being social deviants. The overt idea behind gambling on horses is to earn income, but , apart from those owners, trainers, and jockeys in the club, and a select group (though one hesitates to use the collectivity with such highly individualistic men) of pro gamblers, most backers cannot hope even for a steady earnings and definitely not for a fortune. A lot of them do not have the resources to finance the massive outlays which gigantic winnings need.

Furthermore, to achieve success in the long run the hacker needs to grasp form, genealogy, and probability theory; the bookmaker merely has to hang around for the punters ' mistakes. In time most gamblers lose; they know they lose; yet they continue to bet. What they are looking for is the occasional windfall, the finance for a spree be it in the pub or shopping centre. Actually for them gambling is an inefficient but exciting alternative choice to saving.

Indeed, excitement is maybe the genuine motivation for most gamblers. Win or lose, gamblers obtain 'a substantial amount of excitement. And a diversion from the cares and troubles of daily life'. Gambling has a very important temporal aspect, the delay between making a bet and knowing the result. The effect is that on the racecourse 'some of the most stimulating moments in a man's life. Are those which pass between the time when the horses have flashed by the post and when the winner's number is hoisted ', and off the course the stress can be extended till the press dash out the early editions.

For many , betting is a chance to brighten their lives; taking an opportunity destroys routine be it the daily grind of the factory operative, the never-ending unrewarded jobs of the housewife, or the boredom of the leisured classes, encircled by the requirements of the social calendar. Maybe for the rich betting is a sort of prodigious consumption, a method of putting their wealth in evidence. For the poor betting is, in the words of George Orwell, 'the cheapest of luxuries': an outlay of 10 new pence or maybe less gives them a chance to beat the system; for an instant they may be able to try and control their fate. And make no bones about it, gambling on horses has more to do with ability than luck. Although they use imperfect data, most backers make a real psychological effort, selecting their decisions by a deliberate application of rational factors. Finally, betting also performs a social function in providing an open sesame to certain sub—cultures: 'What won the 3.30? ' is a safe conversational gambit in any working-class bar. In such cultures the facility to pick winners brings social recognition, and the eagerness to share [horse racing systems](#) especially the hot tip straight from the stable thru dubious casual friends, serves to cement relations. Obviously betting has its positive side and isn't merely the reckless, anti-social activity, caricatured and condemned by the anti—gambling brigade.

Harriet Harman is a betting fan and reporter on [horse gambling](#) systems, including popular manuals and software like [Cash Master](#).

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