

Press release (March 2010, for immediate release)

With pic

Middleham Stables Open Day, Good Friday April 2, 2010

Awzaan, the winner of the prestigious Shadwell Middle Park Stakes at Newmarket last season and a leading contender for this year's 2,000 Guineas, will be one of the stars on show at the Middleham Stables Open Day on Good Friday, April 2.

Awzaan, trained by Mark Johnston, is currently the fourth favourite at 12-1 for the Newmarket Classic on May 1.

Sheikh Hamdan al Maktoum's three-year-old colt is unbeaten in four starts. Last season he followed an impressive win in the Dubai Duty Free Mill Reef Stakes at Newbury with a Group 1 success in the Middle Park at Newmarket.

Mark Johnston will be once again be holding a question-and-answer session at Kingsley House during the morning on Open Day.

Other equine stars on show include Almaty Express from John Weymes's Ashgill Stables, a horse who has already made history by winning the first-ever race at Great Leighs; Ryalux, trained by Andy Crook, who won the Scottish Grand National in 2003; Paul Murphy's Cerium who came fifth in last year's Grand National; and Southampton, owned by the legendary J P McManus and trained by Ben Haslam.

Last year the Open Day was attended by more than 6,000 people and raised £16,000 for local charities.

This year's Open Day will be officially launched at 9.15am by Kathryn Apanowicz, television personality and partner of the late Richard Whiteley, a great supporter of racing in Middleham, together with Gary Verity, chief executive of Welcome to Yorkshire.

Judith Brickwood, a spokesman for the Open Day, commented; "Middleham Stables Open Day raises thousands of pounds for local charities **as** well as putting the town on the map. I urge everyone who loves racing in Yorkshire – and beyond – to come and support us," she said.

The Middleham Stables Open Day, which is sponsored by the Northern Echo, in association with Welcome to Yorkshire, presents a unique opportunity to visit some of England's top racing stables.

Judith Brickwood commented: "Horse racing has been at the heart of Middleham since the 18th century when race meetings were held on the High Moor and today the town accommodates seventeen of England's flat and national hunt trainers with over 400 horses in training.

He explained: “The Open Day provides an opportunity to meet the winners and to talk to the trainers, jockeys and stable hands at this ever-popular annual event. In addition to the afternoon events, there will be a country fair trade stands and market stalls, while a farrier will be demonstrating his skills”.

William Hague MP for Richmondshire said: “Middleham is a tremendous success story and fully deserves its reputation as the finest racing centre in the north of England. We have some phenomenally successful trainers and it is wonderful that they open their yards to so many people. This is a very special day in the racing year.

The yards are open to the public on Good Friday from 9.30am – 1.00pm. Free parking is available in Middleham or nearby Leyburn, with bus links between car parks and the outlying stables. Admission is £6 in advance for adults or £7 at the gate. Children under 12 are admitted free.

The Wensleydale Railway is putting on a special early train on the timetable from Leeming Bar to Leyburn for the Stables Open Day on Good Friday. Buses will then run to Middleham. Visit their website www.wensleydalerailway.com for latest information and times and to book tickets

For **all other** enquiries, please call Middleham Key Centre on 01969 624411.

- **Middleham Trainers Opening**

James Bethell, Andy Crook, Chris Fairhurst, Micky Hammond, Ben Haslam, Mark Johnston, George Moore, Paul Murphy, Jedd O’Keeffe, Joss Saville, Chris Thornton, Kate Walton, Simon West and John Weymes.

For further information please contact Robert Beaumont of Robert Beaumont Associates on 01423 323139