

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **OFFICE BAR COMES TO CARLISLE RACECOURSE**

Carlisle Racecourse and The Office bar are proud to announce a ground-breaking partnership which heralds a new era for leisure facilities in the UK.

The Office, which is a popular contemporary bar on Carlisle city centre's busy Botchergate thoroughfare, is to take over the running of what is currently known as the Seafood Bar at the racecourse.

This is the first time that any of the 14 racecourses owned by the Jockey Club, including Aintree, Haydock, Cheltenham and Epsom, have ventured outside their central national contract to allow a local business to take charge of one of their bars or catering operations.

The move will see the Seafood Bar renamed The Office, once it has undergone a complete refurbishment to prepare for an exciting new food and drinks menu, likely to feature tapas. It will also signal the start of a close working relationship between the city centre bar and the racecourse, aimed at being mutually beneficial to customers at both venues.

John Baker, the racecourse's managing director, said: "This is a totally new venture. We are bringing a locally-run high street bar with its own identity and name direct onto the racecourse. Nothing like this has ever been done before, not just at Carlisle Racecourse but at any Jockey Club racecourse. This is the first time it happened anywhere.

"We are looking forward to welcoming The Office's expertise to help regenerate the bar they are taking over. I am sure it will be a big success and will play a significant part in attracting more people to the racecourse for our meetings and also in enabling those spectators to continue their enjoyment afterwards at The Office."

The Seafood Bar is in a popular central location at the racecourse, adjacent to the Edinburgh Woollen Mill Grandstand and the betting ring, behind the tote stand.

Paul Hopper, owner of The Office, said: "We will be working together with the racecourse to recreate the sort of attractive environment and facilities we provide at our city centre bar in premises up at the track so people can relax and enjoy them there too. The partnership will offer customers somewhere to go throughout the afternoon and then continue on into the evening if they want on any race day at Carlisle.

"We will be encouraging our customers to go to the racecourse - and

vice versa. People talk about a recession but at The Office we have opted out of it! We are looking at things from a different angle and remaining very positive and it is paying off. People are still going out and having a good time, certainly at The Office they are. We are a free house and are not governed by the big brewers, which will allow us to serve a much wider range of drinks, including Champagnes and beers as well as spirits."

The Office's links with Carlisle Racecourse have already seen it host the official after-meeting party for its Ladies' Night for the last two years. The racecourse was also the venue last year for a party to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Northern Security Ltd. Mr Hopper is managing director of the Carlisle-based security company.

The new partnership will allow cross-venue advertising as well as special food and drink promotions and transport link-ups, such as free shuttle bus services between the two venues. The Office at the racecourse will only be open on race days. Mr Hopper acquired the bar on Botchergate two-and-a-half years ago.

The catering operation at Carlisle Racecourse is run by the London-based Compass Group, which will continue to run all the other permanent food and drink outlets at the venue, including restaurants and bars.

The Jockey Club, which also owns Newmarket racecourse, ploughs all the profits from its venues back into horseracing.