

Sports Thoughts Radio

Ian: Hello, Ian Danter here, with another edition of 'All Sports', bringing you all the action from that jewel in the Cotswold's crown - Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. We've an action packed day for you today, oh yes... with live reports from the racecourse and at local sports facilities and, in what's a first for 'All Sports', we're going into the wellbeing centre at GCHQ, to see if we can expose a few secrets about keeping fit in the intelligence services. It seems they might well be exercising more than just their minds... but anyway, let's start where thousands of people start, and that's at the world famous racecourse, and it's over to our man on the spot, Phillipa 'the fillie' Gibbons. Phil, let's hear it, from the horse's mouth...

F/X people milling, busy place

Phillipa (shouting over the hubbub): Thanks Ian, I'm standing here on the racecourse itself in beautiful Prestbury Park, surrounded by the Cotswolds and literally thousands of people. As well as racing at other times throughout the year, the world famous Gold Cup Festival every March attracts almost a quarter of a million people from all over the world – and especially Ireland – turning Cheltenham into one huge, swinging party – well, not swinging, but you know what I mean. Actually, with Gatcombe Park and Badminton, and hundreds of miles of beautiful bridleways, Cheltenham is a bit of a horse lover's paradise...

F/X horse neighing, roar of crowd, thudding of horses' hooves...

... and with that, it's back to Ian, in the studio.

Ian: Thank you Phillipa. We'll be back for live commentary when the next race starts. Meanwhile, I think something's happening at the rugby. Let's go over to George...

F/X bit crowd roar.

George: (Excited) And you join us here as Gloucester just score an absolutely marvellous try, to take a 7 point lead over their rivals. Premiership rugby is alive and kicking in the Cotswolds...

F/X line goes dead.

Ian: Premiership rugby might be alive and kicking, but that's more than can be said about our feed to the ground. I also think we're having technical difficulties with our football commentaries today too, with several Midlands teams in action. We'll bring you news just as soon as we can. While we're waiting, let's go over to Taz who's spent the last few days looking at what's available for sports nuts in Cheltenham. Taz, where are you?

FX of thwack of tennis balls.

Taz: I can tell you it's been an interesting few days. There's actually quite a lot going on around here. I've found a total of 25 golf courses, including some really beautiful ones set in the rolling Cotswolds. I've ski'd on dry slopes, fished for salmon on the banks of the Severn. I've mountain biked and rambled, I've rowed and canoed and capsized, and I've done a dry run for the famous Cheese Rolling festival at Cooper's Hill. And it's all ended here...in the outstanding facilities of the Civil Service Sports centre in Cheltenham... here, on the lovely, well-appointed grounds you can play rugby, football, skittles, squash, table tennis, darts, rounders, tennis and archery... hey, watch where you're pointing that, will you? Let's talk to Jo who's a regular here. Jo, like a lot of people in Cheltenham, you work for GCHQ don't you?

Jo: Yes.

Taz: And you're a member of this club?

Jo: Indeed. Everyone who works for GCHQ can join, for a small subscription which opens up onto a big sporting world.

Taz: And what's your particular sport?

Jo: I don't actually do sport. I come here for the bingo and barbecue. It's just like a meeting place, all sorts of events.

Taz: I'm going to interrupt you there. I think we're standing in line of the archers.

F/X of equipment and running, breathless.

Ian: We'll be back with Taz to hear how he got on. In the meantime, as mentioned in my intro, it's time to go to the most secretive gym in the world, right in the centre of GCHQ's HQ in Cheltenham.

F/X exercise machines.

Mark: Hi Ian. Yes, deep inside, once you've passed the restaurants and cafés and delicatessens, you come to... the wellbeing centre. There's a rather well-appointed gym here with a range of cardiovascular equipment, a treatment room where you can get sports massages and acupuncture, and a whole load of training and fitness programmes. And I'm here with expert Instructor, Jane. What's going on here?

Jane: All sorts of things. But we just like to help our people be fit and healthy. We offer yoga, body conditioning, aerobics, street dance and pilates... so we've got all tastes covered here.

Mark: Yoga. Now that sounds more my kind of thing. Ian, I'm just about to do some gentle contemplation, and so back to you.

