

Oxford or Cambridge? A time-honoured challenge that heralds the ~~the~~ Centenary Boat Race. Watched by Dr Owan, their coach, the Light Blues round off training at Ely.

J.A.N. Wallis ^(ROW) ~~the~~ No. 2 Stancliffe. ~~the~~ three - Hill ~~the~~ Four - ~~the~~ Masser / Five. Baynes / Six. Davies. ~~the~~ Seven Bruce. Stroke Marshall, with Tanburn as Cox.

Cambridge (who won last year) lead by 54 wins to 44 - with one dead-heat.

(2) at Wallingford, near Oxford, the Dark Blues made great strides under the care of Coach A.D. Rowe - after suffering several set-backs.

With Four Australians in the boat - their order of rowing is:-

Bow. Wheadon. Numbers two and three, Vine and Gobbo, both Australians.

Four Raikes (his family's fifth rowing blue). Five Quick / Six and seven ~~McLeod and Pain~~

McLeod and Pain, the other Australians. Stroke Harrison, and Cox Wally Marsh

Over now to Aintree, where a motor-racing track is being laid alongside the Grand National circuit. Mrs Topham (the Managing Director of the Course) discusses the new project before supervising the rebuilding of jumps for the World's greatest steeplechase.

The winner? Well, what about Irish Lizard, third last year and winner of his last three races?

IRISH LIZARD is co-favourite with Coneyburrow - ~~the~~ thought to be the best of six Irish challengers.

Royal Tan tries again - after finishing second in 1951, and falling a year later.

Royal Tan is trained by Vincent O'Brien - the Irishman who prepared last year's winner, Early Mist.

Vincent O'Brien's other entry is Churchtown - owned by his wife - who proudly watches her First National entry, ~~at exercise~~

Then there's Ordnance - he was leading most of the way last year. ^{IN CONTRAST} Quite Naturally was the first to fall. Unplaced in his last three outings - Alberoni hardly looks big enough

for those thirty massive jumps. (3)

Another Irish hope is Statesman (2) but you can't talk yourself around

Aintree. As for inside information, there's much whispering still to be done before they cheer home the Grand National hero of 1954.

Aintree is being prepared for another chapter in the century-old story of the Grand National. And under the watchful eye of Mrs Topham, (Managing-Director and Secretary of the course), the sixteen jumps are made ready for the world's greatest steeplechase.

A five foot fence, ^{The fence} Valentine's Brook is backed by six feet of water. While the filling of the water jump brings a protest on behalf of the forty-four horses left in the race.

Last year's winner, Teal, is not among them. He's recovering from a ~~serious~~ ~~abdominal~~ operation. But his stable-companion, Wot No Sun, will be one of Neville Crump's two representatives. A safe jumper, Wot No Sun had been twice placed ~~but his luck of starting second may tell, if the going is slow.~~ Larry Finn, (the other Crump entry) may be ridden by A.P. Thompson, last year's winning jockey.

A fancied runner from Bobby Renton's stable, Little Yid won at Aintree, last November, while Cushendun won't find the pace ^{As} ~~so~~ hot as in the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

Their galloping companion, Flagrant Mac, the Scottish National winner, will not run. ~~As this is pointed to their chances.~~

And what of the Irish challenge - led by that brilliant trainer, Vincent O'Brien, from ~~Ballydoyle~~ Ballydoyle House, Tipperary. Royal Tan will not run. But has Lucky Dome, three times a winner in Ireland beaten the handicapper? He carries bottom weight!

Stable companion Early Mist fell at the first fence last year, so there's ample room for improvement.

One thing is certain, they'll both be produced in the pink of condition by a trainer who has an ever-growing record of success on the British Turf.

Remember his Hatton's Grace - three times winner of the Champion Hurdle? Here he is in high spirits, enjoying ^{AND MAKING THAT DONKEY FEEL QUITE GIDDY} ~~his honourable~~ retirement. Meanwhile,

Lucky Dome trains on for the great thirty-jump Aintree test. Vincent O'Brien has yet to win the National. ~~This could be his~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX lucky year~~

But whatever happens over those four and a half miles of thrills and spills - a new name will be added to Aintree's Roll of Fame.