



Eamon Lacey 14 Apr 2021



'Fairytale stuff' for viral video celebrity Clonmel hotelier John Nallen

Video footage of the raw emotion and ecstatic reactions of Clonmel hotelier John Nallen as he cheered home Rachael Blackmore and Minella Times to Aintree Grand National glory on Saturday has captured the hearts of people all over the world.

The dramatic scenes were captured by his friend John Harney unknownst to John Nallen as he was caught up watching the horse he reared on his farm at Lavally create history.

"I had no idea John was filming me. I was just glued to the television," said John Nallen who nurtured Minella Times for four years before he sold the horse to JP McManus in 2017.

Less than a month ago, John, who owns Hotel Minella with his sister Elizabeth, saw another horse he reared, Minella Indo, cruise to victory in the Gold Cup.

"It is just fairytale stuff really, you don't even dream stuff like this," said John.

The Cheltenham victory was huge but it went up another level on Saturday after Killenaule's Racheal Blackmore steered Minella Times to an historic triumph.

Within minutes of the footage being posted on social media by John Harney of The Final Furlong pub in Clerihan it went viral. Since then John Nallen has been inundated for interview requests from the media.

"It has been absolutely crazy. I have never seen anything like it. The phone has just not stopped," said John.

Returning from a point-to-point meeting on Saturday afternoon John realised he was running late and was in danger of missing the race. "I just pulled into John Harney's house otherwise I would have missed it," said John.

"I was privileged to watch the race with John. "Seeing my great friend so elated was one of the best days of my life," said John Harney. The [video](#) was social media gold.

By Monday evening the video of John Nallen living through the final stages of the race had been seen 235,000 times on the Aintree Racecourse site, 140,000 times on Tik Tok and 137,000 times on the Final Furlong Facebook page.

The video was also viewed by hundreds of thousands of people on the sites of national and local newspapers, RTE and British TV channels and racing channels.

"I was very proud of Rachael and Minella Times and delighted for Henry de Bromhead," said John. The Grand National winning horse is called after the Irish Times as John explained.

"I was sitting at reception late one night filling out forms for three horses. "I looked around and saw the Irish Times, the Irish Independent and the Examiner on the desk and called the three horses after the papers," said John.

He spoke with great pride of the long association Hotel Minella has with the Blackmore family. "Rachael's parents Charles and Eimir were married in the hotel and her grandfather dealt with my father in the hotel as he was a Guinness area manager back in the fifties," said John.

It is ironic that at a time when Hotel Minella is regrettably closed for business because of the pandemic that the Minella name is now being spoken about all over the world. "Our industry has been wiped out.

"You might have seen me crying on Saturday looking at the horse winning but when you sit in an empty hotel every day and nobody is there you are crying too.

"That is the situation we are in," said John.

