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Scotney to consider US-style security on big days

Published: 30/05/2006 (Sport) By Graham Green

PAUL SCOTNEY, the HRA's head of security, has been to the United States to see if lessons can be learned on improving racecourse stable security at major meetings. The fact-finding mission, during which Scotney attended his first Kentucky Derby and also visited Keeneland racecourse, followed the security breach at Aintree in April when a journalist, claiming to have the 'stopping' drug ACP, gained access to Hedgehunter's box.

Following that incident, Scotney raised the possibility of having stable employees wear something visible to make identification easier, and that view appears to have been reinforced by his trip.

While at Churchill Downs, Scotney paid special attention to the Big Event Team, a group of racing commission investigators and Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau officials who coordinate backstretch security for big races that could be potential targets for terrorist attacks, including Grade 1 events at eight different tracks.

He later told the Thoroughbred Times: "I've just been looking at how the Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau does things to see what I can learn. The Big Event Team is not something we do at the moment, but it sounds like something we would consider.

"When you travel, you see how different people handle things. Seeing how they handle big races with their Big Event Team has been helpful. I'm thinking about re-doing some things on how I handle my big races."

Back in Britain, Scotney said yesterday: "We are not necessarily looking at big meetings from the point of view of national security, but I wanted to see what they do on major racedays in America that we don't do.

"I was particularly interested in what they do in their stabling area because obviously we want to learn from that, and we are reviewing our stable security at the moment anyway.

"What we are looking more at is making people more visible around the stabling area so we can see who should be in there, who shouldn't, and that sort of thing."

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