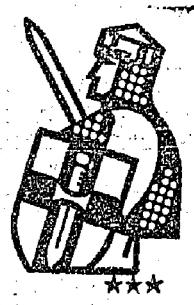


**Three
die as
high
speed
train
rams
Cortina**



BIG RACE PULL-OUT INSIDE

Grand National jockey in car grab drama



Steve: "Frightened"

By MICHAEL O'FLAHERTY and PAUL THOMPSON

THREE people died last night when their car plunged off a road bridge and was mown down by a high-speed train which carried it 200 yards along the track.

The accident happened at East Lane, Wembley, North London, near North Wembley station. The bridge is a notorious accident black-spot.

The car — a Cortina — smashed over the bridge parapet and on to the railway line, said London ambulance men who were first on the scene. The bodies were mutilated beyond recognition.

Shouted

Eye-witness Terry Langdon, a 24-year-old lorry driver, told of his desperate rescue bid.

He said: "The car went shooting past our house along the bank, straight on to the track."

"I dashed outside. As I got to the edge of the track I could see a man trying to get out from the passenger side of the car."

"I shouted to him, asking if he wanted any help. Then I saw the train. The man was almost out of the door when the train sliced into the car."

"The back was thrown into the air and hit the overhead pylons. The rest of it was carried down the track."

"I shouted, Oh my God. I thought they were dead."

Impact

"There was nothing I could do. I don't think anyone could have saved them. The train driver couldn't have seen them until the moment of impact. There was no sound or hooter from the train."

Five British Rail staff were taken to hospital suffering from shock. One was the driver of the train.

Another witness, David Waterman, said: "The car just shot through a wire



I've won... Caroline Beasley making Aintree history

Whoa, there! Sleepy Steve is taken for a ride by hijacker

By DAVID WOODING

GRAND NATIONAL jockey Steve Smith-Eccles was recovering last night after being hijacked in his car.

Steve, 30, admitted: "I was frightened out of my life."

His blue Mercedes was stolen outside an hotel — as he slept in the back.

The jockey, who rides 20-1 Classified in today's big race, found himself being driven at high speed down a motorway by a joy-rider.

Steve should have been resting in the Royal Clifton Hotel at Southport, Merseyside.

The Newmarket-based jockey explained: "I came back in the

early hours from a night out to find the doors bolted. So I decided to try and get some sleep in the back of the car.

"I took a rug and a few coats from the boot and went to sleep, but the next thing I knew I woke up and realised I was moving."

"I pulled back the blanket and looked out of the window and realised we were going down the motorway. The driver was really shifting and the car was swerving from side to side."

When Steve sat up the surprised thief slammed the brakes on. The car screeched to a halt on the hard shoulder and the youth ran off across fields.

Steve, who admitted having drunk "a few," eventually made his way back to the hotel. He said: "I did not report the incident to the police."

Last night Mr Snuggit was 7-1 favourite to win the National. Flamboyant owner Terry Ramsden stands to win £500,000 if his horse romps to victory.

Yesterday his hopes of caning the bookies for a staggering £5 million collapsed when another of his horses, Brunco, came third in a two-mile hurdle race.

Mr Ramsden's high stakes accumulator was riding well after two first-day wins at

Now Caroline tames Aintree

● THAT winning Aintree smile came from Caroline Beasley yesterday, 24 hours before the Grand National. She rode to victory in a fox hunters' chase, becoming the first woman to win on the National course.

● After dismounting from Eliogarty, Caroline said: "I had a fantastic ride. The horse never did anything wrong." In 1983 she won at the Cheltenham National Hunt Festival.

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Aintree. But after Brunco's defeat he was still smiling — after putting £50,000 each way on Mr Snuggit.

Leading bookmakers William Hill said: "It looks like being a record-breaking Grand National for the punters this year with £50 million expected to be riding on the big race."

A massive security operation was mounted last night after threats of sabotage by anti-racing demonstrators.