

UK trained horses dominated the card which saw four out of the five races won by the raiders at the final race meeting of the year which drew one of the biggest crowds for many years to Les Landes yesterday afternoon.

Feature race of the afternoon was the Race Club's most prestigious handicap of the season The Clarendon which was sponsored by Hatstone Lawyers, given the rainfall in the previous forty eight hours it appeared that conditions had come right for joint top weight and odds on favourite Major Maximus who had bolted up in the Jersey Derby, however the six year old produced his most disappointing run of the season eventually finishing a never nearer fourth seven and a half lengths behind shock winner River Du Nord trained by Mrs Sue Gardner. Prior to this season the six year old had been trained on the Island showing little worthwhile form which saw her handicap rating plummet to a paltry mark of nine as a result connections sent her to the UK for a jumping campaign but after failing to take to hurdling she had come back to the Island and won a low level handicap at the Jersey Derby meeting. However even given her style of victory on that occasion, River Du Nord looked to have it all to do as she was thirteen pounds out of the handicap and taking on the pick of the Islands middle distance campaigners. Having been in the front three for the first mile of the race, rider Jemma Marshall kicked for home half way down the back straight, the move soon had most of the field under pressure and although it looked as if the Guernsey trained Garden Party was coming to take the honours with a well judged late challenge inside the final furlong River Du Nord held on for a shock short head win over the Sarnian with the ever consistent Neuilly a further two lengths back in third. This was winning rider Jemma Marshalls sixth win of the campaign and at the end of the afternoons racing she collected the trophy for leading lady jockey.

The George Baker trained and Sir Alex Ferguson owned If I Had Him has been a regular visitor to the Island this season and had won on all four previous occasions, but prior to the opening race of the afternoon The Fine Art Handicap Hurdle it appeared that he was facing his toughest consignment to date giving eleven pounds and over to his five rivals. From flag fall If I had Him contested the lead with frequent rival Landolino, turning for home the latter faded tamely away as The Bay Bandit who had been stalking the front pair in third for much of the race drew alongside If I had Him before taking up the running jumping two out, this looked to be a race winning move, however the Les Landes track has a stiff finish which seems to bring out the best in If I Had Him who responded to jockey Mattie Batchelor's urgings with the long time leader getting back up in the shadow of the post to win by a half a length with the pair five lengths clear of a never nearer Azaria. This was without doubt the winner's best performance of the season.

Having been just touched off with his first runner at the course, in form UK trainer Neil Mulholland gained quick compensation in the following Priory Devils Hole Handicap courtesy of Novabridge. After one false start the starter let them go second time round even though First Cat's chance in the five furlong sprint all but disappeared as he lost ten lengths on the rest of the field at flag fall eventually beating just one rival home. At the business end of the race jockey Gerrard Tumelty having been denied close to the post in the previous race timed his challenge to perfection on Novabridge to win by a neck from Fast Freddie who ran his best race of the season with Country Blue a further head away in third.

The Dame Phyllis Somers Charitable Handicap was restricted to horses that had not visited the winner's enclosure this season. Fine the World once again dug her heels in at the start and refused to race which will probably mean that this temperamental mares racing days are over. Vamos took this event last year and yesterday he seemed to be in a genuine frame of mind and led the field home under Tim Clark to win by a comfortable four lengths from favourite Anfield Road with Rocquaine once again looking one paced five lengths away in third. Winning owners Sheikh A'Leg Racing clinched the champion owner's

title as a result of this victory although main contributor to this success was Neuilly with the enigmatic Vamos finally aiding the cause with a win and two places in his last three races. This was also trainer Alyson Malzard's eleventh and final win of the season meaning she retained the top trainer's title.

The Animal Health Trust Coronation Mile was a fitting finale to the season with nine going to post and all in with a chance as the field approached the final furlong, having taken the opening race on the card trainer/jockey combination of Messers Baker and Batchelor ended the season in style as I'm Harry took charge of affairs in the final furlong to come home four lengths in front of Pas D'Action with Mr Opulence a further length and a half back in third. With I'm Harry denying Pas D'Action victory it meant that his stable mate If I had Him was crowned champion race horse for the season and also confirmed that Mattie Batchelor took his first CI champion jockey title.

It appears that there were a number of horses making their final appearance on the race track as retirement beckons for them so there should be a number of new faces among the equine fraternity for the 2014 season.