

Post Race Write Up 24.05.15

The third meeting of the Jersey Raceclub's season kicked off at Les Landes, and with the watering system in the process of being fixed it was left to the lush covering of grass to provide the cushioning on the fast ground.

The day started with the Les Landes Maiden hurdle, which historically attracts few runners and with it being restricted to Jersey trained horses it was pleasing to see what looked a competitive field of 5 line up. Three of the field were jumping a hurdle in public for the first time, with Steely who had run a decent race when third in last year's Champion Hurdle, and Eightfold a recent recruit from the UK having shown they can at least successfully get to the other side of a hurdle still on 4 feet. Captain James a recent French recruit to the on fire Gilbert yard was sent off the evens favourite, with last year's Derby winner Rossetti at 13/8 having the best flat form on offer. As expected the free running Steely set off in front under Mark Quinlan at a generous gallop, with Rossetti and Eightfold close up in 2nd and 3rd, and the favourite Captain James held up at the back. With the quick pace there was no room for jumping errors, and by the time the field past the post after the first circuit Steely and Rossetti had opened up a 10 length gap back to Eightfold, with favourite Captain James some 15 lengths off the leaders. All were still standing despite some indifferent jumping, but ominously Rossetti had looked fast and slick over the hurdles and was travelling menacingly on Steely's heels. Approaching the 3rd last the strong travelling Rossetti under Mattie Batch took up the running from Steely who soon came under a drive, and turning into the home straight Rossetti had opened up a 20 length lead from Steely and Captain James who had run on into third. Rossetti maintained this advantage to the line, and finished hard held in what was a very impressive hurdles debut. This may set-up a tilt at the Jersey triple crown for this horse who seems to get better the further he goes.

The Bloodstock Advisory Services Handicap over 7 furlongs was the second race on the card, and had attracted a strong looking field of 10 which was reduced to 9 as one of the likely favourites Pas D'Action was a non-runner. This left the English trained Admirable Art to be sent off the 10/11 favourite under Jemma Marshall, with Purley Queen under Freddie Tett a winner over 5f from Country Blue at the last meeting 3/1 second favourite. As the tapes were raised Country Blue under Tim Clark was sent off into a clear lead with Purley Queen sitting second. With several horses in behind fighting for their heads the pace was not a fast one, the field turned in still well grouped and led by the strong travelling Country Blue, with Frankkie M and Purley Queen 2nd and 3rd. As the field fanned out Country Blue kicked on and it was up to anyone to try and catch him. From the pack Spanish Bounty under Mattie Batch was weaving his way through runners en route to the stand side rail, and under a wonderful hands and heels drive from Batch got up in the shadow of the post, to deny the honest Country Blue by a head at 5/1 with Purley Queen back in third. It was nice to see such a sympathetic ride given in such a tight finish by Mattie Batch on a grand servant to the Malzard yard for whom this brought up a welcome double on the day.

The feature race of the day was The Hawk Family Office 2015 Warwick Vase over 1 and a quarter miles, with the field reduced to 8 as Carrera was a non-runner. After his promising reappearance the former Derby winner Major Maximus was sent off the 11/8 favourite, with the English trained Edward Elgar and the consistent Grey Panel close behind in what was best described as a tight betting heat. As the field jumped off, Herbalist was sent straight into the lead by Mark Quinlan, with Edward Elgar and Granit Man close up and after 3 furlongs Herbalist had opened up a 10 length lead as he skipped around the top bends. It was obvious that Herbalist had set out to run the finish out of his rivals, and on the fast ground the rest of the field were hoping that he would tire. Approaching the final half mile Charlie Bennett was pushing Edward Elgar along to try and reduce the deficit with little response and it was left to Grey Panel to start to try and claw back some of the lead under Tim Clark. Turning into the home straight Grey Panel had reduced the lead to just two lengths, but the question would be

how much petrol he had used to do so. The answer was too much, as the A Murray & R Davison owned Herbalist stayed on strongly to eventually finish 3 lengths clear of the staying on again Edward Elgar with Grey Panel a further 2 lengths back in third. Major Maximus ran on well into 4th on ground that would have been plenty quick enough for him. This provided a welcome first winner of the season for the promising Karl Kukk yard whose horses have been running well without winning.

Fourth race of the day was The 144th Day of the Year Handicap Mile for which the last time out winner Lucifers Shadow was sent off the odds on favourite. The English trained 3rd favourite Wicked Tara was sent on by Charlie Bennett, with the other English trained runner the maiden Polydamos close up along with Lively Little Lady under Nora Looby and the favourite held up in 6th but hugging the rail under Mattie Batch. Down the back straight first Lively Little Lady, and then Fast Freddie took on the leader who soon came under pressure as these front 3 started racing too soon. The intelligently ridden Poydamos and Lucifers Shadow stalked them in 4th and 5th. Turning into the straight Polydamos found a split between horses to strike the front, but Lucifer's Shadow still glued to the inside rail was travelling well under a patient ride from the evergreen Mattie Batch. As they approached the furlong marker these two were inseparable and both battled all the way to the line where Lucifers Shadow prevailed by the narrowest of margins to land the odds and bring up a treble on the day for Mattie Batch. Lady Petrus once again ran on all too late to take a distant 3rd for Phillip Prince.

The concluding race The Queen Victoria's Birthday Handicap was run over 1m 6f which is the longest flat race at Les Landes, and the impressive winner last time out Aussie Lyrics was sent off the odds on favourite under Freddie Tett. Next in the betting was the English trained Par Three and the J Lowery owned Fourni under four timer seeking Mattie Batch. The grey, almost white Vertueux set off in front under Jemma Marshall, with Dalmo sent off in close pursuit and Par Three in 3rd and the hard pulling Benoordenhout under Richard Hobson in 4th, and favourite Aussie Lyrics was held up off the pace. Turning into the home straight for the first time and it was a contrasting story, Vertueux led in with Dalmo already driven along in second apparently not enjoying himself, and Benoordenhout refusing to settle and pulling his way into second. The order remained the same as the field set out on their second circuit, 5f out and Dalmo started to cry enough and the pushed along Par Three moved in to third behind Vertueux and Benoordenhout who both still travelled well and Aussie Lyrics took up 4th some 6 lengths back. As they rounded the bottom turn push came to shove on Vertueux and Par Three while Benoordenhout still travelled strongly with Aussie Lyrics struggling to make up ground. Turning in and Benoordenhout kicked for home from the staying on Par Three and the back peddling Vertueux and the labouring Aussie lyrics. 1 1/2 furlongs out Richard Hodson steeled a glance over his shoulder and was still 3 lengths clear, however the leaders earlier exuberance was starting to show, and the staying on English trained Par Three was starting to stay on with renewed purpose. 1/2 furlong out Par Three swept past under the persistent Nick Slater and went on to win by 4 lengths from the tiring Benoordenhout and the staying on Aussie Lyrics.

4 of today's races were most generously sponsored by Bloodstock Advisory Services and the Hawk Family Office for which the Raceclub is very grateful. The next meeting is the Saturday June 13th evening meeting, so bring your picnics and enjoy racing with the sun setting over one of the most spectacular race courses in the world.

** Photo is Herbalist being driven out to win the feature race.