

JERSEY RACE CLUB

12 August fixture – Ladies' Day

By Bobsbest

Ladies' Day is one of the Jersey Race Club's better ideas. On this special annual occasion women share the spotlight with the object of most racegoers' attention, the horses. This year there are two events, with generous prizes, in which the ladies will be judged on their appearance. The first is for Best Dressed Lady the other for Most Outstanding Hat, but the more shy and retiring need have no fear, there will be no catwalk parade. Instead the judges will mingle with the racegoers throughout the afternoon before comparing notes and deciding upon the winners. You just have to turn up looking good.

Here's a tip for would-be winners, the judges will be David Gainsborough Roberts, Ed Sallis and, fresh from her big day, Becky Houze, Miss Jersey Battle of Flowers; spot them and smile.

Perhaps the day should be titled Ladies' and Young People's Day because this year there is another prize, for Best Dressed Young Person. There will be no mistaking the judge of this contest, he is none other than Oscar Puffin – Oscar Grosnez Claude Corbiere Puffin to give him his full name - doyen of Channel Television's presenters; Jenny Mullin will be around to help the star.

David Gainsborough Roberts, who has been a generous and enthusiastic supporter of Ladies' day for many years has provided a huge number of Puffin prizes and memorabilia for participating children. And ladies, David has some very special and exclusive awards for your competitions and, thanks to the Bastille Brasserie, there will also be a number of champagne prizes.

Sky TV's Chloe Bowler will be conducting events and at shortly after 4.15 she will call finalists to the parade ring – which will be empty of horses – for the awarding of prizes.

-oOo-

Just in case you were beginning to wonder, there will also be an exciting card of races. The principal event is The Coutts Channel Islands Handicap. Coutts have long been associated with the Race Club and, in a year when the Club's resources have been severely tested, their continuing support is very much appreciated. Run over the extended mile, this handicap is reserved for horses rated 55 and below. As I have remarked previously, these so-called low-level

racers provide some of the most exciting finishes and this looks another puzzle for punters. Superduper, who will be retired at the end of the season, carries top weight, but she's earned it with a number of consistent efforts this year, particularly earlier in the season. She gives a pound to stablemate La Verte Rue, also consistent and possibly a shade unlucky once or twice; she finished in front of Superduper last time. Rebel Woman, twice successful this year, boasts the best form and the frustrating Vamos who has a good run in him, but does his best not to show it, had four of these behind him last time and seems sure to be prominent.

The programme starts with the longest race run during the season, over two and a half miles, The Ladbrokes Odds On Machines Members Lounge Handicap Hurdle. It's hard to see anything getting Landolino off the bridle; the champion hurdler is now having to give lumps of weight to horses he beat out of sight at levels, but that's unlikely to stop him. Nordic Affair is consistent and will get the trip, but he's not in Landolino's class while the other two seem equally well held. If there is a tiny chink in the favourite's armour it may be the length of the season; he got very warm in the parade ring before the Derby, sometimes a sign that a horse is staring to go over the top. That said, sweating or not, he still ran a corker in the Derby.

The Ladbrokes Money Back – Live Football Handicap over seven furlongs is a hot affair. Spanish Bounty finally came good last time over a trip that was probably short of his best; he was impressive and seems to have improved for better going and a bit of sun on his back. He has form with First Cat, who whizzed in at this distance early last month, but flopped badly over a slightly longer trip when a hot favourite last time. He could bounce back. Fast Freddie is very consistent, but having something of a bridesmaid season, a comment that applies equally to the veteran High Voltage. Pas D'Action's owner was unimpressed when I suggested his gelding was better on easier going and he then proceeded to run a very good race when just held by prolific scorer Grey Panel last time. Annia Galeria must cause her connections' blood pressure to rise; she's won a race and clearly has ability, but she's also sometimes difficult at the start and then pulls hard in her races; she's over a stone out of the handicap here, but one day it will all fall right and she'll win again.

The Ladbrokes Ladies Day Handicap over a mile and a quarter sees the Derby winner carrying top weight and giving 5lb to Neuilly who was finishing strongly 4 lengths behind Major Maximus in that race; it could be close between them. I'm a fan of Grey Panel who was dismissed as a mudlark earlier in the year, but bolted in on faster

going last time over a shorter trip and like Major Maximus is still on the upgrade; he gets 24lb from the Derby winner. Becks Bolero won it last year, but this looks a much stronger renewal, the others seem outclassed.

The card winds up with The Ladbroke Game On! Handicap over a mile and a half for horses rated up to 60. This is the fourth race on the card sponsored by Ladbrokes; John McCririck – the Big Mac – refers to Ladbroke as “the magic sign” and they have certainly sprinkled some magic dust the way of the Race Club with their strong support. Garden Party heads the weights, but we’ve seen him just once this year and he’s obviously had problems; if he comes through this test I imagine the Clarendon will be his end of season target. Sumbe failed to stay last time, but even so it was a poor run as he was beaten before distance became an issue. Uniform Ruby has winning form, but can be wayward while Lady Petrus is honest, but limited; she has run well the last twice though and usually manages a win per season. Fine The World has had a great season; I am among those who doubted both her ability and her resolution in the past, but she is transformed this season and, if she has not gone off the boil, she will run well again. It’s a difficult getting-out stakes, but aren’t they all.

I wonder if Honest Nev (Fine The World’s owner) and fellow bookies will be betting on the outcome of the race for Best Turned Out Lady?

I mentioned earlier that Superduper will be retired from racing at the end of the season; she has been found a good home and doubtless more homes will be needed when some of our older generation of racehorses are retired. This is an aspect of ownership that needs careful thought; it’s great when they are fit, well and racing, but owners need to think about the time when their horses’ racing days are over. As we approach the end of another season it’s a topic worth some careful consideration.

Selections:

Landolino
First Cat
La Verte Rue
Grey Panel
Lady Petrus