

## **JERSEY RACE CLUB**

Preview Sunday 29 July – Jersey Derby fixture

By Bobsbest

It's called the Derby because of a toss of a coin. The real Derby that is, the one that takes place at Epsom on the first Saturday in June, but it could so easily have been called the Bunbury. The story goes that the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby and Sir Charles Bunbury, the most prominent men of the turf of the day, tossed a coin to decide whose name would attach to a new race for three year old colts; the noble Earl won the toss, but Sir Charles had the pleasure of winning the first running of the Derby in 1780.

Since that time racing authorities round the globe have been using the name to distinguish a particularly important race, and Jersey is no exception. Whereas the real thing is restricted to 3 year old colts and fillies, the Les Landes equivalent has only the distance and the fact that it is a weight for sex race in common.

It is generally regarded as the most important race in the local calendar and it is often, though not always, won by the highest rated horse in training locally. Certainly last year's winner King Kenny ended the season at the top of the ratings, but time will tell whether he is able to emulate some of the stalwarts of the race of recent years. None had a better record than the remarkable Off Minor, who Stephen Arthur trained to win or finish runner-up six times between 2002 and 2007. He had some mighty battles with the grey mare Minnie's Mystery, winner in 2003 and second in 2002 and 2005 when trained by Colin McCready. Crossways won it twice in 2004 and 2006 for Alyson Malzard who also sent out The West's Awake and Koka Fast to take the prize. It was Joan Le Brocq's Carr Hall who created perhaps the biggest turn up when winning in 2007 despite getting beaten off light weights in handicaps. Among successful jockeys still riding only Mattie Batchelor and Mark Lawson have won the big race; Tony Procter and Adam Jones won it twice and back in 2004 Crossways was ridden by Rab Havlin, before he became a leading light for John Gosden and others at Newmarket.

So much for the roll of honours past, who is going to wear the crown, generously sponsored this year the Morton family, on Sunday? Here's a horse-by-horse guide.

**Anfield Road.** Started the season well, winning off a mark of 58, but the target was to retain the Champion Hurdle; for a number of reasons that didn't work out and he's been rested since. He has had

two sharp tussles with Neuilly this season (not much between them) and lines up with a 3lb higher mark, which shouldn't be good enough. Official rating 61.

**King Kenny.** The King won the 2011 Derby and ended the year on a mark of 82, but hasn't carried all before him this term: his connections have blamed the prevailing soft going, but he's also faced tough tasks in handicaps and has fallen 7lb in the ratings. Official rating 75.

**Landolino.** A faultless season so far, including the Champion Hurdle and he's won on the flat with consummate ease: a handicapper's nightmare because he is so unexposed and although he went up 6lb for that sole flat win he's still on a lowly mark; there's little doubt he's much better than that. Official rating 58.

**Lang Shining.** To call him an enigma would be putting it politely; he has oodles of ability and no little class, but his problems are all in his head: fallen from the heady days of running in a Group 1, he arrived on a mark of 66 and has dropped another 6lb despite a couple of decent runs. Official rating 60.

**Major Maximus.** Max has had a great season to the huge credit of his one-horse trainer, going up no less than 17lb; all distances seem to come alike and most believe the handicapper hasn't caught up with him yet: it must have been tempting to continue farming lesser races. Official rating 61.

**Neuilly.** One of two mares in the race, so enjoying a 3lb weight advantage; she's been the stable's flag bearer this season with handicap wins over Anfield Road and Fast Freddie and racing off a mark 4lb above the start of the season. Official rating 60 (63).

**Rebel Woman.** The other mare has won two minor races and is clearly still on an upward curve, but on her present mark she has a mountain to climb. Official rating 41 (44).

No horse has won back to runnings in the last decade so King Kenny has history against him, but he doesn't know that and he is clearly the best on official figures. The numbers don't always work out though and with two rapid improvers in the shape of Landolino and Major Maximus together with the classy Lang Shining this looks to be the most competitive Jersey Derby in years.

The Derby programme starts with the Cenkos Channel Islands 'Many Happy Returns Susan' Conditional Hurdle: let's hope Susan enjoys the day. This is a race for horses that have not won more

than one hurdle and in truth it looks a weak contest. Reach Out has fallen 20lb in the ratings since arriving and has at least shown that he jumps well enough; Robbmaa won a Worcester selling hurdle in 2010, but shown little since while Athania won on the flat at Easter and will have the assistance of Jamie Goldstein, but she's been absent since the end of April so has presumably had problems: Les Landes has been struggling to find form.

The Hatstone Lawyers Handicap over the minimum trip has attracted all the speed merchants, headed by Spanish Bounty who, on the evidence of his two most recent runs is ready to win, but he has to give a stone to Fast Freddie who may not have been quite as effective this season, but is still capable of making every post a winning one. Kersivay is on a hot streak, but High Voltage may need more help from the handicapper; the rest are out of the handicap to varying degrees.

The Bloodstock Advisory Services Handicap over the extended mile sees ten going to post; were it run over a slightly shorter trip one-eyed First Cat would be a confident selection having easily beaten Spanish Bounty over 7 furlongs last time. He's still racing off a mark 1lb below the start of the season and is clearly in great heart. However, he may not relish the stiff finish over this longer trip and maybe Beck's Bolero, certain to stay and in receipt of 21lb, will be the stronger finisher. It's not a match though and others are also in fair form; Pas D'Action could be fancied, but seems to prefer cut in the ground while La Verte Rue probably ran her best of the year last time.

The last race serves as a reminder, The Next Meeting is Ladies' Day Handicap, and it's run over a mile and a quarter, restricted to horses rated 55 and below. Which Fine The World will turn up? She once refused to race and behaved like a bit of a madam in her most recent outing over hurdles, nevertheless Tony Le Brocq has got a better tune out of her than anyone else and if she's got a happy face on there's no point looking further for the winner. If she doesn't want to play it could be close between Sumbe and Lady Pertus. You pays your money and you makes your choice.

Selections:

Athania  
Fast Freddie  
King Kenny  
Beck's Bolero  
Fine The World

## Jersey Derby – 10 Year Roll of Honour

<b>Year</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner up</b>	<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Jockey</b>
2002	Off Minor 5 ch g	Minnie's Mystery	JSO Arthur	A Beech
2003	Minnie's Mystery 5 g m	Off Minor	C McCready	K Bradshaw
2004	Crossways 6 b g	Off Minor	A Malzard	R Havlin
2005	Off Minor 8 b g	Minnie's Mystery	JSO Arthur	A Procter
2006	Crossways 8 b g	Off Minor	A Malzard	A Jones
2007	Carr Hall 4 b g	Off Minor	J Le Brocq	V Slattery
2008	The West's Awake 5 b g	Koka Fast	A Malzard	A Jones
2009	Danehill Dazzler 8 b m	Wall Street Runner	JSO Arthur	A Procter
2010	Koka Fast 8 ch g	King Kenny	A Malzard	M Batchelor
2011	King Kenny 6 ch g	Sans Sa Dame	A Corson	M Lawson