

Former C I Champion Jockey Tony Proctor made a winning return to Les Landes yesterday afternoon, having not ridden at any of the meetings during 2012, Proctor was straight back to winning ways riding a first and last race double to get trainer Joan Le Brocq off the mark for the season which also saw another trainer Stephen Arthur register his first winners of the season.

Proctor and Le Brocq's first success came in the opener The Queen Mary Maiden Hurdle which prior to the race seemed to have most the sizeable of the sizeable crowd wondering which of the three was most likely to get round such was the lack of form over the jumps for all three runners. In the end Copper Falls was sent off the favourite but it took all of Jockey Mattie Bachelor's skill to even get the filly out on to the track and once he had accomplished that task the four year old showed great reluctance to line up at the start. After a couple of efforts Bachelor did manage to persuade his mount to ride as she set off a couple of lengths behind her rivals a position that she never moved out of thanks to a number of sketchy jumps and a couple of attempts to pull herself up. As for the other two National Monument made the running for most of the race with Proctor keeping Bollin Fergus on his tail until after the third last after which he cruised past the long time leader after which the only danger was the two remaining hurdles which he negotiated safely to secure a facile twelve length win. What the handicapper will make of this race remains to be seen as whilst the winner looked impressive in truth the "race" was only a match as Copper Falls should now carry a wealth warning to all punters as she seemingly has fallen out of love with the racing game.

Second race of the afternoon was The Geoffrey Edwards Memorial Handicap sponsored by the Edwards and Snyman families. This saw trainer Stephen Arthur visit the winners enclosure for the first time this season courtesy of Fist Cat's seven lengths win over Pas D'Action who ran well on the firm ground with Spanish Bounty a further Length behind. The six year old seems to enjoy racing on quick ground and once he hit the front passing the furlong marker went away from his pursuers, if the ground remains on the fast side he could well follow up.

Feature race of the afternoon was The NH&P Warwick Vase sponsored by Nigel Harris & Partners Limited, nine runners went to post and all appeared to have some chance prior to flag fall, however as the field turned for home the Alyson Malzard trained Neuilly led the field although it seemed as she would be engulfed by the rest of the field, however under Mattie Bachelor the six year old held off the challenges of Anfield Road and Becks Bolero by a head and a neck in the closest finish of the afternoon. There is no doubt that the mare is improving but this must go down as one of her better wins as a mile and a quarter is probably well short of her best distance as she has not got a great turn of foot at the business end of her race as she is an out and out galloper. Anfield Road ran a most pleasing seasonal debut in second and would be one to note at this distance later in the year if the handicapper is not too harsh on him. Disappointment of the race was Major Maximus who appeared to put in a lacklustre effort never being sighted and eventually finishing seventh. Those who had the foresight to back the first two in a forecast on the tote were rewarded with a bumper payout of £292.50.

Stephen Arthur completed his double on the afternoon's card when Red Lago held off the challenge of stablemate Athania in The Golden Gate Handicap. Having run well at the previous meeting the winner showed the required improvement to pass the post two lengths clear with Rebel Women a further two lengths back in third.

Final race of the afternoon was The Biro Anniversary Handicap which saw Trainer Le Brocq and Jockey Proctor complete their doubles of the afternoon when Landolino held off the challenge of Sweet Liberta by four lengths with Roquaine a further half a length back in third. Unfortunately for her backers Fine

The World once again decided to show her mulish tendencies refusing to race at flag fall and as a result punters would be wise to give the nine year old a wide berth when choosing where to place their hard earned cash at future meetings.

Red Lago's win in the fourth race meant there were no winners of the tote jackpot so a pool of over £2,000 could well be on offer at the next meeting on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June.