

## **JERSEY RACE CLUB**

Friday 28 June Midsummer Evening fixture  
Preview Part I

By Bobsbest

### **The Downton Abbey connection.**

If anyone doubted that sporting events are an attractive part of Jersey's tourism offering they should make their way to Les Landes on Friday evening.

A long weekend in the Island is now a fixture in the brochure of Horseracing Abroad, a specialist travel company that takes racegoers all over the world. So, Les Landes sits proudly alongside The Breeders' Cup, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, the Dubai World Cup and many more 'must do' racing events.

The Horseracing Abroad party arrives on Thursday and having checked into the Club Hotel & Spa they will enjoy all that Jersey has to offer, including the annual midsummer evening fixture at Les Landes, before returning on Sunday. Many of the party will be second or third time visitors.

They, and all racegoers, may also meet another outstanding visitor in Harry Herbert – outstanding because at 6 feet 6 inches tall, he is quite literally, head and shoulders above the crowd. Mr Herbert, or to be correct The Honourable Harry Herbert, is the younger son of the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon whose home was Highclere Castle, perhaps better known nowadays to millions of television viewers as Downton Abbey. It is now the home of Harry's brother the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl, but Highclere is the name under which Harry Herbert and his colleagues run Britain's most successful ever racehorse ownership syndicates.

Those colleagues include Harry's brother-in-law John Warren who is also racing and bloodstock adviser to the Queen. It was he who was seated alongside Her Majesty last Thursday when her filly Estimate won the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot. One does not hug the Queen, but John Warren appeared to come close to doing just that in one of the most exciting moments of recent turf history.

Highclere Thoroughbred Racing is sponsoring a race on Friday and Harry will be there to present the trophy, but doubtless, if asked, he will also talk about the Jersey Lily syndicate, which it is hoped will

comprise principally Jersey members. The syndicate will acquire two yearlings this autumn to put into training with Richard Hannon and Andrew Balding. It is named in honour of one of Jersey's most famous daughters, Lillie Langtry, who, though well known for a number of other reasons, was also a very successful racehorse owner.

While the Highclere team are always quick to underline the uncertainties associated with racehorse ownership, it is also fair to point to successes like that of Opinion, winner of the Duke of Edinburgh Stakes at Royal Ascot last Saturday for Highclere's Herring (named for the artist not the fish) syndicate. As the saying goes, if you're not in, you can't win.

For reasons that remain a mystery, this is the only evening meeting of the season. Anyone who hasn't witnessed the sun setting behind the horses as they race past Grosnez Castle and on toward the finish has missed a racing spectacle worth going a long way to see.

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