

The Jersey Race Club's 2013 season draws to its traditional Bank Holiday conclusion on Monday with the feature race on what looks to be the most competitive card of the year being most prestigious handicap on the Race Club calendar "The Clarendon" this year sponsored by Hatstone Lawyers.

There are three past winners of the event in the field of eight runners who go to post with dual Jersey Derby winner Major Maximus likely to be a warm favourite, the Christa Gilbert trained six year old having been an impressive winner of this year's Derby then following up at the last meeting by beating Moose Moran and Neuilly (who are 4lb and 3lb respectively better off at the weights this time) even though jockey David Cuthbert was unable to give any assistance due to a slipping saddle. Without doubt Major Maximus still looks to be ahead of the handicapper even though he is joint top weight on this occasion, if he runs to form he will be very hard to beat, however it should be noted that he has twice missed his intended races this season due to firm ground, and also failed to show his true form on the two occasions this season when running on fast ground, so the prevailing quick ground given the lack of recent rain will not be in his favour. The other joint top weight is Moose Moran won three mid season races in succession earlier this year seems to show his best form on quick ground. The Alyson Malzard trained Neuilly has once again been a most consistent performer having won three and been placed on every other outing this season, the mare won this event last year, that was a four runner affair and this time round she faces much stronger opposition. King Kenny is another former winner having taken the honours back in 2011 however he has failed to salute the judge since April 2012 and accordingly has dropped down the weights to what appears to be a handy mark. of more interest is the Guernsey trained runner Garden Party who won this in 2010 and finished second in both the 2011 and 2012 renewals, he has yet to finish out of the first three this season and came with a late rally to win at the last meeting he is in receipt of a handy 18lb from the top weights. The other three runners in the race are Sissi Guihen who has failed to show any signs of winning this season, to date her best run is a fourth on her last appearance so she would need to show improved form to take a hand in the finish, Bollin Fergus won a hurdle race earlier this year but is 6lb out of the handicap and like Sissi Guihen needs to run his best race of the season to get into contention, finally the UK trained River Du Nord won at the end of July but this is a much tougher consignment and being 13lb out of the handicap would be a shock winner. As to who wins Major Maximus would be the obvious choice, but as previously mentioned there has to be a question mark given the forecasted quick conditions, so the other Joint top weight Moose Moran is selected just in front of Garden Party.

The opening Fine Art Handicap Hurdle has attracted a field of six runners including If I Had Him and Landolino who oppose each other for the fourth time this season, the former owned by Sir Alex Ferguson has won on each occasion, with the most decisive victory coming at the last meeting, although this time Landolino is 6lb better off at the weights If I Had Him might still have enough in hand to finish in front again, however both may not see off the challenge of the other UK raider, The Bay Bandit trained by Neil Mulholland whose yard is in good form having had four winners and three places from its last fourteen runners, this six year old won at Stratford back in May and on his last appearance finished second in a selling hurdle giving 5lb to a horse rated 104, given that If I had Him is running off his Jersey rating which is a stone above his last known UK handicap mark it would appear that The Bay Bandit has a few pounds in hand of his two main rivals. The field is made up by two Alyson Malzard runners Deepika who arrived in the Island at the start of the season with decent form in the French provinces but has failed to sparkle on Jersey soil and Azaria who won a couple of hurdles last season but would appear in need of a step up on her past runs to get close to the three main protagonists and finally Nordic Affair who is over a stone out of the handicap and failed to get anywhere near If I had Him and Landolino at the last meeting in a race that was over half a mile further which should of suited this dour stayer, whilst it should be noted that The Bay Bandit's best two runs over hurdles have been at

Stratford which is a flat track unlike the Les Landes track which has a stiff uphill finish, taking a chance on his ability to handle the track he is the selection on the basis that his yard is firing and he appears to be well in at the weights.

Mulholland's other entry on the card is Novabridge who runs in The Priory Devils Hole Handicap over the minimum distance of five furlongs, the five year old has a couple of wins to his name but would not appear to have as good a chance of taking the honours as his travelling companion. Alyson Malzard saddles the majority of runners in the seven runner field with stable jockey choosing Spanish Bounty from the yards four runners, second in this event last season the gelding has been running consistently during the season having finished second on her last two runs but might just come up short again. Country Blue finally showed his best form to win at the end of July but that was on rain softened ground and his runs on a fast surface this season do not inspire confidence, of the other two stable entries Nordic light is over a stone out of the handicap and would need to run his best race of the season to take the honours, which leaves Kersivay who appears to be the stables best chance in the race, this trailblazer may prove hard to catch if getting a flying start under its feather weight. Fast Freddie from the Angie Corson yard has a similar profile to stable mate Clarendon entry King Kenny and seems a shadow of his former self, which leaves First Cat from the Stephen Arthur yard who is taken to lead the field home, looking at the form of his win at the first July meeting in which he beat five out of his six rivals on Monday (the exception being Novabridge) over the same distance he now meets all five on more favourable terms.

Fourth race of the afternoon is The Dame Phyllis Somers Charitable Handicap and is for horses which have yet to win a race this season, due to the conditions of the race it may be best to approach selecting the winner by a process of elimination. Joint bottom weight Toggle's best form is at distances far shorter than this mile and a quarter so whilst the nine year olds appetite for racing cannot be questioned he would appear to need to catch a bus in order to get this trip! Rocquaine has been tried over a variety of distances during the course of the season she appears to be one paced at every one when it comes to the business end of the race. Anfield Road would be nailed on if he showed his best form but has only run on three occasions this season so would appear to have had his training problems. Another entry who has had a spell on side lines is Fine the World, she has not appeared on the track since refusing to start at the Warwick Vase meeting back in May, she has also shown signs of temperament on far too many occasions but does have ability when consenting to race, the percentage call has to be avoiding her given the fitness after her long absence plus the chance that she may refuse to start once again. Another one of the enigmatic Les Landes regulars is Vamos who appears to be unlucky in running in far too many of his races which leads to the conclusion that he is not the most genuine of creatures, however it should be noted that he did finally consent to put his best foot forward in this race last season in order to pay a well overdue visit to the winners enclosure. Robbmaa has shown little worthwhile form this season but could well be the dark horse of the field as he did win at a big price during last year, this is the type of event which may see him burst back to form. This leaves La Verte Rue who like two of her rivals has had limited race day appearance this season stable jockey Mattie Batchelor takes the mount on one of three Malzard trained runners, on her best form from previous seasons it would not come as a surprise to see her take full advantage of the stone and a half that she receives from top weight Anfield Road and lead this inscrutable field home.

The finale is The Animal Health Trust Coronation Mile this is a fitting climax to the season as Mr Opulence is the only runner in the eight strong field who has failed to win this season, this may be due to the fact that he has been competing in the some of the stronger races since his arrival on the Island, whilst he has an outside chance it may prove wiser to look elsewhere. Top weight is UK raider I'm Harry

will need to be at the top of his form to take the event. The Angie Corson trained Beck's Bolero finished third in this race last season and may well run into a place in this renewal. Pas D'Action has been a revelation for owner Jim Jamouneau this season although his task has been aided by a fair degree of leniency from the handicapper, he is expected to once again take a hand in the finish but may just be found out on this occasion. Lucifer's Shadow has two ways of running; the grey will need to be in a positive mood if he is to have any chance. Athania was a winner of a hurdle race earlier in the year and is another in need of his best run on the level this season in order to take the honours. Jackpot absolutely bolted in at the last meeting after being well adrift of the field with three furlongs to go, this race is far stronger in depth and she gives the same amount of ground away this time she may well find the main protagonists not coming back to her in the closing stages. Bottom weight Lady Petrus cannot be ruled out even though she runs from 6lb out of the handicap but the selection is Rebel Women who on a couple of outings this year has looked to be an unlucky runner up after being settled at the back of the field before coming with a late burst, on the one occasion where she was allowed to lay up much closer to the pace of the race she came home a most impressive winner and a repeat of these tactics could see her take what is probably the most intriguing race of the year.

#### Selections

2:30 The Bay Bandit (Nap)

3:05 First Cat

3:40 Moose Moran

4:15 La Verte Rue

4:50 Rebel Women