

The English stable of trainer George Baker maintained their fine start to the Jersey Race Club season with another double on Sunday which included the feature race on the card The Jersey Guineas, although on this occasion UK raiders failed to sweep the board as Christa Gilbert produced the first locally trained winners of the season.

Gilbert's first winner came in the opening Chesil Bank Handicap Hurdle, odds on favourite Special Report put the early pace to the race under pilot Mattie Batchelor and had three of his four rivals off the bridle and beaten by the third last hurdle, however Freddie Tett had ridden a patient race on Landolino and brought his mount alongside the long time leader jumping two out before Landolino eased away eventually passing the post an impressive twelve length winner on his seasonal debut from Special Report with Azaria three and a half lengths back in third.

The same trainer/jockey combination notched up a quick fire double in the following Channel Island Racing and Hunt Club sprint, although this event saw both favourite Kersivay and Chester's little gem having to be withdrawn following a false start as both of them completed the course. Fortunately chaotic starts are a rarity, but when they do happen the starter seems to be the target for racegoers frustration, however on this occasion the finger should not be pointed at him as the false start was caused by the jockeys attempting to gain an edge on their rivals by charging the tapes before the starter was in a position to let them go, with the riders of the two withdrawn horses appearing to ignore the recall flag and in the process do little to pull their mounts up. When the remaining four runners eventually raced Country Blue scorched off into the lead and turning for home was well clear, but Tett riding Purley Queen timed his challenge to perfection and took the lead passing the furlong marker eventually winning by six lengths with the tiring Country Blue just holding off Thirtypointstothree by a nose for second.

Prior to racing the afternoons feature event The Jersey Guineas sponsored by The Bloodstock Advisory Service appeared to be a question of by how far the George Baker trained Ancient Greece would win? Having been an easy winner at the Easter meeting when conceding weight to all his rivals, therefore on this occasion as he only had to give weight to one of his rivals it appeared that he only had to turn up in order to take the honours. Although he did win Mattie Batchelor had to drive his mount home as First Cat mounted a sustained challenge over the last furlong, eventually being beaten by two lengths with Spanish Bounty just over four lengths back in third.

Baker and Batchelor then teamed up again in the following Liberation Brewery Handicap when I'm Harry showed a clean pair of heels to his rival as he came home two and a half lengths clear of River Du Nord with King Kenny a further ten lengths back in third. The winner had been raised five pounds on the handicap following his win at the last Jersey meeting but appears to still have plenty in hand and could well be in for a significant hike in the ratings.

Batchelor completed a hat trick of wins on the card when the Neil Mulholland trained Midnight Sequel got the better of Grey Panel in the closest finish of the afternoon to win by a half length with Pas D'Action three lengths back in third, unfortunately this race was marred when Rebel Woman appeared to clip heels as the field came round the final bend giving her rider Jenny Ferguson a horrible looking fall, after receiving attention from the on course medics Ferguson was taken to hospital via ambulance.

Next meeting sees the Race Club hold their first Saturday meeting for many years this takes place on 7<sup>th</sup> June with the first race due off at 6pm.