

In keeping with tradition Easter Monday afternoon saw The Jersey Race Club hold their first meeting of the new season at Les Landes with the race card boosted by nine horses trained in the UK, at this stage of the season runners who venture across the water have a huge fitness advantage over their locally trained counterparts with most having had at least one recent outing and yesterday this fitness edge meant that all five races on the afternoons thoroughbred card were won by horses trained in the UK. After having to endure the wettest of winter's clerk of the course Mark Evans had the track in fine condition with the meeting taking place of good to soft ground meaning that there could be going concerns for any of the runners.

Prior to the official start to the season the pony club held a four furlong race sponsored by Amy builders Limited for their young riders which attracted a field of six. This saw Texas Tori under a well judged ride by Olivia Moss come with a late challenge to beat Paris Benest's Mount Fabians Destiny in a photo finish, with Kilcole Man ridden by Victoria Malzard back in third.

The main card started with The Mark Twain Handicap Hurdle, unfortunately two late scratching reduced the starting line up to three and backers of the odds on favourite The Bay Bandit never had a moments worry as last season's champion jockey Mattie Batchelor cruised into the lead on the home turn and sauntered clear to win by an easy eight lengths from the Alyson Malzard trained Reach out whose stablemate Azaria brought up the rear a further length and a half back in third.

As the field turned for home in the following Liberation Brewery Handicap it looked as if The Bay Bandits trainer Neil Mulholland was going to make it a quick double as Midnight Sequel burst to the front under Harry Poulton however it was Mattie Batchelor who made it two from two on the George Baker trained I'm Harry who was winning for third time in the Channel Islands scoring by three lengths from Midnight Sequel with Reach the Beach making it a clean sweep for the UK raiders a further six lengths back in third.

Jockey Batchelor completed his treble and trainer Bakers double on the afternoon when Ancient Greece once again rewarded favourite backers with a facile win in The La Verte Rue Handicap after steering his mount into the lead two furlongs from home Batchelor enjoyed an armchair ride eventually passing the post ten lengths clear of King Kenny with Steely a further five lengths back in third.

Feature race of the afternoon was The Jersey Bookmakers Handicap which went to the Brendon Powell trained Copper Falls, in the past the five year old has shown a reluctance to start and at one stage looked as if she was going to show this side of her temperament again, however her Jockey Mathew Lawson was finally able to get her to jump off at the back of the field when the tapes went off and then came through with a late and well timed challenge to get the better of favourite George Baker (the horse trained by the man with the same name) by a length with First Cat who ran an encouraging race for first season trainer Karl Kukk four lengths back in third.

The winning trainer and jockey combination together with owner's messers Banfield and Hackett completed a double on the afternoon in the finale The Henry VIII Handicap when Jackpot was given a similar ride to her stablemate Copper Falls with Lawson happy to get a lead until the home turn before asking his mount for her effort once the finishing line was insight, the four year old quickened away from her rivals to salute the judge seven lengths clear of Grey Panel who ran a good race given he was top weight, with Rebel Women a further six lengths back in third.

Whilst yesterday afternoon saw the UK raiders sweep the board now the locally trained horse have a run under their belt they should be far more competitive at the next meeting at Les Landes which takes place on Sunday 25th May although prior to this Guernsey hold their annual race day on Monday 5th May at L'Ancrese.