

Post Race Write Up 13.06.15

Given the thunder, lightning and torrential downpours of the previous 48 hours the Jersey Race Club's fourth meeting of the season was lucky to be held under beautiful blue skies and light winds. The preceding rain however was very welcome and the ground was officially given as good.

The feature race of the day was The Episode Fund Handicap, raced over the minimum trip in Jersey of 5 1/2 furlongs. A competitive field of 6 went to post with the consistent Purley Queen and Country Blue vying for favouritism. Country Blue who had been second the last time was looking to go one better, while Purley Queen was returning from a third over 7 furlongs which just seems to stretch her stamina. The field got off to a level break, although Mark Lawson on Chester'Slittlegem appeared to be caught flat footed and gave them all several lengths after the tapes had gone up. Country Blue as is his wont set off to make the running under Mattie Batchelor closely followed by Purley Queen and Movementneverlies while Kersivay who normally likes to make the running was rushed up to take closer order. Out the back the inexperienced Rainbow Charlie was soon driven along, while the slow starting Chester'Slittlegem was allowed to slowly creep back in to the race. Country Blue was under heavy restraint in front, but the pace picked up when he was joined by Kersivay under Jemma Marshall racing into the dip. Turning for home, Kersivay racing on the outside started to find the pace too hot, and Purley Queen moved back into second some 3 lengths off the leader, with Movementneverlies and Chester'Slittlegem close behind. Mattie Batchelor showing no ill effects from his crunching fall in the hurdle race kicked for home, while the challengers fanned out behind him. Approaching the furlong marker the lead was still at 3 lengths, and although starting to tire in the final furlong this was enough for the Aly Malzard trained Country Blue to see off Purley Queen by a length at the line, with Chester'Slittlegem running promisingly back in 3rd.

The day had got off to a less auspicious start for Mattie Batchelor whose mount Rossetti crashed out in a nasty looking fall at the 6th flight in the 2 1/4 mile hurdle race that kicked the card off. 5 went to post of which 3 had serious claims, Rossetti a very stylish winner at the previous meeting on his first start over hurdles, Agapanthus a last time out winner over fences at Kempton and the enigmatic The Kvilleken having useful form when in the mood. Rossetti jumped off in front under a confident Mattie Batchelor, with Dalmo close up in second and Agapanthus third and the free running The Kvilleken under Freddie Tett fourth while Pomander brought up the rear. For the first circuit Rossetti displayed the same fast accurate jumping as he had done on his debut, and turning into the home straight for the first time he travelled strongly in front which was quite the opposite of Dalmo who was already driven along at this early stage. At what would be the last flight next time round the complexion of the race changed dramatically though as Rossetti guessed at the hurdle and took off a stride too early barely making it to the other side where he crumpled on landing. Rossetti was quickly on his feet and appeared none the worse, but Mattie Batchelor took a while before thankfully getting on his feet. This left Agapanthus under Mark Quinlan in front with the still hard pulling The Kvilleken second passing the post with a circuit to go, Dalmo appeared to have had enough and was passed into third by Pomander. Jumping the third last Agapanthus came under a drive as The Kvilleken moved upsides still pulling the proverbial train under Tett and rounding the last bend there looked like the race was all over such was the ease with which he travelled, however a less than fluent jump at the second last offered a glimmer of hope to the second and although his jump at the last was much better The Kvilleken appeared to not want to win today and the brave Agapanthus went on to score a 1 length victory with Pomander under Richard Hodson running with much more promise in third.

Second race of the day was the mile and a half Green Valley Handicap kindly sponsored by Tom Busher & Elizabeth Benson, for which 7 went to post with Major Maximus a notable non-runner. Steely, River du Nord and King Kenny all vied for favouritism, and it was the hard pulling Steely under Mark Quinlan who set off in front from the tapes. Restrained in second was Hawaiian Freeze under Richard Hodson who was putting up 11lbs overweight, while River du Nord under Jemma Marshall sat third with the rest tightly grouped. Turning into the straight the first time Steely was already 10 lengths ahead, with the rest of the field happy to allow him this lead. The lead was maintained and maybe even increased as Steely skipped round the top bends and headed down the back straight. Passing their departure point the pack were beginning to eat into the lead with King Kenny under Nora Looby moving in to second. Turning in to the home straight King Kenny had made it to the flanks of Steely but the effort to do so soon took its toll and he was passed by Hawaiian Freeze who now set off in pursuit of the longtime leader, and passing the 2 furlong marker he took up the running with Steely retaking second and Diamond Penny running on into third. Come the line and the order remained the same with Hawaiian Freeze passing the post 1 1/2 lengths in front of the game Steely with the same distance back to the third placed Diamond Penny under Mark Lawson. This provided a deserved win for one of Jersey's newest trainers James Moon, but it remains to be seen what the handicapper makes of the win given the large overweight.

The fourth race on the card was the PraxisIFM Handicap Mile for which Pas D'Action was a significant non-runner, this left a field of 5 to go to post with the hat-trick seeking Lucifers Shadow and last time out winner Herbalist joint 11/10 favourites. What the race lacked in numbers it made up for with drama at the start, with the race finally getting under way at the third time of asking although even then there was a post-race stewards enquiry in to the validity of the start. With the normally front running Herbalist and Fast Freddie reluctant to start this afforded Eightfold under Mark Lawson an easy lead in to the first bend followed by the Malzard trained Speedy Writer under Jemma Marshall, with joint favourites Herbalist under Mark Quinlan and Lucifers Shadow under Mattie Batchelor bringing up the rear. As the field began to stretch out down the back straight in the glow of the setting sun the lead was some 5 lengths from Speedy Writer and the not so fast today Fast Freddie while the rest of the field travelled well within themselves. The first to come under pressure was Fast Freddie under Nora Looby, while Herbalist was sent on in pursuit of the leader in to second while Lucifers Shadow continued to travel well back in fourth on the rail. Reeling off the bottom bend and Lawson went for home on Eightfold, while Speedy Writer, Herbalist and the improving Lucifers Shadow made a line of three some 4 lengths behind the leader. Lucifer's Shadow emerged as the main danger but he was unable to make any inroads to the lead which had increased to 6 lengths at the line, with a further 10 lengths back to Herbalist in 3rd. Eightfold was a welcome first winner of the season for Angie Corson, and the yard could now be coming in to form given the improved performances of a number of the yards runners.

Final race of the day was the 'Let It Be' Handicap over 1 1/4 miles and under a beautiful luminous sky, 7 made their way down to post. The English trained Mrs Burbidge under Mark Quinlan was the narrow favourite from the Mattie Batchelor ridden Carrera. On jumping off it was obvious that there wasn't a natural front runner, and it was left to the Gilbert trained Captain James under Freddie Tett to make the running, while several behind fought for their heads against the steady gallop. Rounding the top bend the restrained favourite Mrs Burbidge sat second with the Kuk trained Lady Petrus on her outside followed by Carrera, Beck's Bolero and Grey Panel while Rebel Woman was forfeiting a staggering amount of ground by going four wide. Heading down the back straight in the gathering dusk there was little change, and the field was tightly packed. On the run towards the home bend Mrs Burbidge who had the benefit of the inside rail poked her head in front while Captain James began to get out paced, and Beck's Bolero challenged on the outside. Turning in Mrs

Burbidge led from Beck's Bolero with Rebel Woman again travelling nearly five horses wide trying to make a run on the outside, while Grey Panel was taking the much shorter route up the inside rail into fourth. Behind these the others were back peddling apart from Carrera who began to make his run. Approaching the final furlong Mrs Burbidge led by a length from Grey Panel with Carrera running on into third. As the leader began to come under increasing pressure he began to wander and briefly impeded Grey Panel under Richard Hodson who was trying to mount a challenge up the rail, and it was Carrera who mounted one last challenge on the leader but this was in vain and the Neil Mulholland trained Mrs Burbidge ran out the 1 length winner from Carrera with Grey Panel a similar distance back in third. This brought up a double on the day for both Jockey and trainer. There was a lengthy stewards enquiry into the interference between the first and third which eventually concluded with the positions remaining unaltered.

The race club looks forward to seeing you all again for our second evening meeting of the season on Friday June 26th.