

A big and enthusiastic crowd gathered for the first of the Jersey Race Club's popular evening meetings on Friday 17 June. Despite breezy conditions there were blue skies on a pleasant evening and the ground was firm.

The opening UBS Handicap Hurdle produced plenty of thrills and spills having attracted the biggest field for a Hurdle race run on Jersey for several years. Despite the defection of UK raider Crazy Train, due to travel difficulties, seven faced the starter for the 2m1f event but that field was reduced by one at the very first hurdle as Dalmo blundered and unseated leading rider of the season Philip Prince. It was an awkward fall for Prince, formerly a leading Point-to-Point rider in the UK but now firmly established as a jockey on the flat, and as the 13/8 Favourite Steely under Nick Slatter led the field back round into the home straight at the end of the first circuit it was clear that the remaining six runners were going to have to "bypass" the hurdle where Prince was receiving attention. Going towards the flight over on the far side of the course (usually the third last jump but on this occasion 2 out) Steely held a 2 length lead from Cahill and Hawaiian Freeze with Fourni already being driven along in fourth. Already tailed off were Toretto and Granit Man. The race's complexion however changed dramatically at this hurdle as Steely fell, badly hampering Hawaiian Freeze thus handing Cahill a clear lead. Some way behind Granit Man, distracted by this incident, also unseated his rider. With the final flight of hurdles once again omitted on the final circuit there was a much longer run-in than usual but 5/2 second favourite Cahill, under Mark Quinlan riding for trainer Christa Gilbert, was able to coast home to win by 12 lengths from the rallying Fourni who stayed on for second on the flat under Mattie Batchelor with Hawaiian Freeze third. The Guernsey-trained Toretto was the only other finisher in fourth. All three horses who either fell or unseated returned unscathed and all three riders involved in falls were able to ride again during the evening although Philip Prince decided to give up his last two rides of the evening following a third-placed ride on First Cat in Race 3. The winner Cahill, who runs in the colours of Ron Vibert and was winning for the second time over Hurdles here this season, will now be one of the favourites for the Channel Islands Champion Hurdle at the next meeting.

The second race on the card was The Green Valley Handicap over 5 furlongs, for which 4 went to post. Favourite to exact revenge was Purley Queen at 4/6 narrowly beaten by Country Blue last time who traded at 15/8. Purley Queen was very slow into her stride from the tapes and was soon detached from the rest of the field by several lengths. Kersivay under Jemma Marshall was on the lead, with the free running Country Blue under Mattie Batchelor sat behind on the inside of Chester'Slitlegem under Nora Looby. Rounding the bottom bend and Kersivay had given way to Country Blue who soon kicked clear up the inside rail, while Chester'Slitlegem was caught flat-footed, and the favourite was struggling to make any kind of impression after her slow start. Approaching the final furlong and Country Blue had

opened up a commanding lead which he maintained to the line, with the running on Chester'Slitlegem running on into second some 7 lengths adrift, and Kersivay holding on to third.

The third and feature race was The Quilter Cheviot Handicap over 7 furlongs, and 7 went to post. Favourite was the Tony Le Brocq trained Benoordenhout who boasted impressive form this year at longer trips. With several of the runners fractious at the start, the field jumped off to a ragged start, and Spanish Bounty was left several lengths. Tim Clark on the favourite was keen to ensure a true test of stamina, and roused his mount into the lead from the Karl Kukuk trained Valmina and First Cat, close up behind these were Chapeau Bleu and second favourite the Jim Jamouneau owned Pas D'Action. The favourite having been lit up at the start was travelling very freely in front at the half way point, with the rest of the field closely grouped in behind including Spanish Bounty who had made up the lost ground. With the order very much unchanged turning in the sprint for home was on. First to challenge the leader was Vamina, and he was followed through by Pas D'Action with First Cat on the outer, approaching 1 out and the leader was still punching away, but in behind the Alyson Malzard trained Pas D'Action was getting into top gear, while Valminas stamina started to wane. 100 yards out Pas D'Action finally got past the leader and went on to win by 1/2 length, with the favourite holding on by the same margin from First Cat. This brought up a double for trainer Aly Malzard. In total this was a twelfth career success for Pas D'Action and amazingly 10 of those victories have come over this exact 7 furlong course and distance. All but one of his dozen wins have come with Jemma Marshall in the plate.

The fourth race was the UBS Handicap over 1 mile 1f with 9 runners. Favourite was the last time out winner, the James Moon trained Black Night under Shaun Payne. The second favourite was Brown Velvet who had shown improved form last time out, this was despite his intended jockey who had taken an earlier fall in the hurdle race having to give up the ride which meant Nick Slatter stood in but at 11lb overweight. The 12-year-old Angie Corson trained Fast Freddie jumped off in front and took the field along, with Larch and Grey Panel close up. Heading down the back and the leader had extended his lead to 4 lengths, with the Christa Gilbert trained Lucifers Shadow moving into second in front of Larch while Grey Panel had lost ground. Meanwhile, the favourite had begun to make ground from off the pace and moved into third past Larch rounding the home bend. Turning in and the leader kicked for home still 2 lengths to the good of the grey Lucifers Shadow who still travelled well under Alice Mills. Approaching the furlong marker and the field was spread across the track, with the leader being challenged on all fronts. On the wide outside the favourite, Black Night was sent about his business, while on his inside Lucifers Shadow began to come under pressure, and on the stands rail Grey Panel was running on strongly again. The favourite was soon on top and went on to win for trainer James Moon easily in the end by 3 lengths from Grey Panel and the gallant Fast Freddie.

The final race was played out under a beautiful setting sun over the islands and sea, and as the field made their way to post past Gronez Castle it was evident why some regard Les Landes to be one of the most picturesque racecourses in the world. Sponsored by The Liberation Brewery, the final race was over the derby distance of 1 1/2 miles, and 8 went to post with Lady Petrus a non-runner due to her intended jockey being unable to take the ride. Mr Opulence who has shown admirable consistency this year for trainer Tony Le Brocq and his team was sent off the 2/1 favourite. Richard Condon on Engaging Smile jumped off in front and was soon over a dozen lengths clear as the remainder of the field were happy to allow him the lead. The favourite sat second under Tim Clark on the inside of King Kenny

under Nora Looby. Passing the judge for the first time the lead remained, but this was rapidly eaten into by 7 out as the leader seemed to be taking a breather. Heading down the back and King Kenny had moved into second, with the favourite in third just ahead of Captain James and Carrera. Carrera soon came under pressure, while Mr Opulence started to make ground despite appearing to travel a bit lazily, while up front King Kenny struck the front on the turn into the home straight. King Kenny drifted to the stands rail, while Mr Opulence began to make ground up the inside rail while the early leader Engaging Smile plugged on in behind. A furlong out and the favourite struck the front while the English runner Spring Overture under Claire Robinson was running on well from the back. Despite seeming to idle a bit in front the winner stayed on to win by a length from King Kenny and the same distance back to the third Spring Overture.