



“Eclipse (Day) first, the rest nowhere!”



Ulysses gets a splash of cooling water from his handler after winning Saturday's Gr1 Coral-Eclipse Stakes.

FOR some UK racegoers, their “best day out at a Group 1” might be the Juddmonte International on the first day of York’s Ebor meeting, staying somewhere pleasant in the historic city. For others, the Sussex Stakes at Glorious Goodwood near the south coast, or the first day of the Royal Meeting where the Queen Anne and St James’ Palace stallion-making contests are on offer.

For many it is none of the above. It is Coral-Eclipse Day at Sandown.

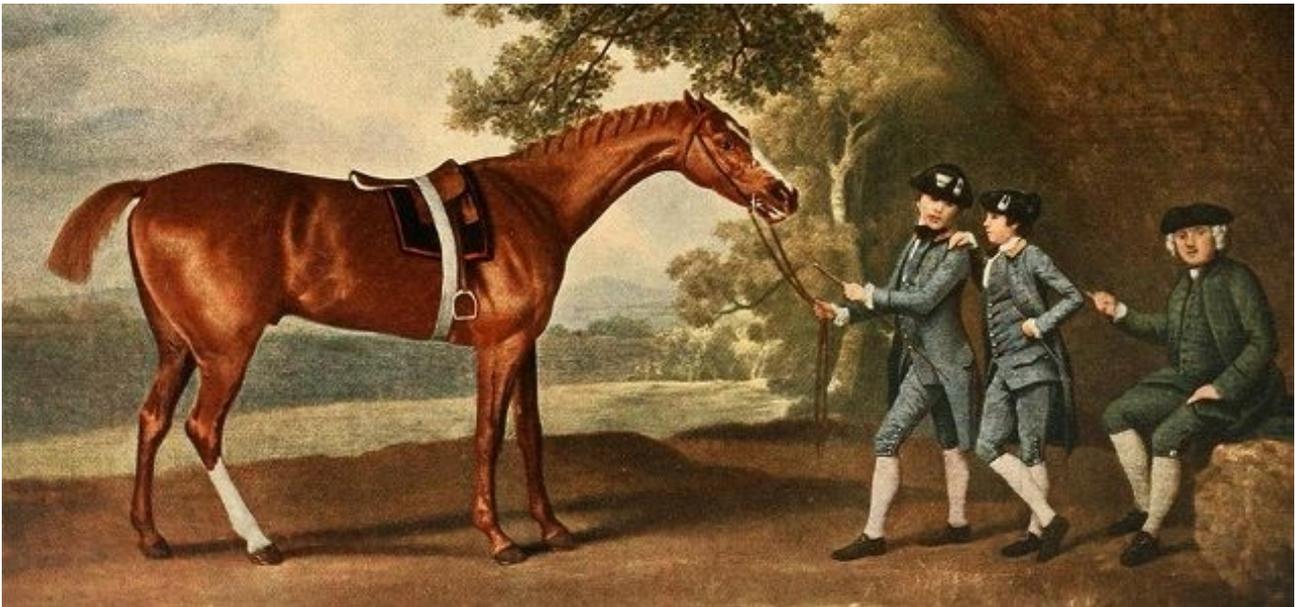
Two days ago when you read this, the Classic generation took on the older horses over a mile and a quarter (2,000 metres, actually 2018 in this case). Established in 1886 and named after the legendary

18th century racehorse who appears in the lineage of around 95% of all thoroughbreds, The Eclipse Stakes’s 1903 running set it out as the clash of the generations with the first three home having won seven Classics between them.

Like “The J&B Met” now “The Sun Met”, the Eclipse is known in tandem with its sponsor Coral who took it on in 1976. The first “Coral-Eclipse” was won by WOLLOW ridden by Frankie Dettori’s Dad, Gianfranco.

Three globally known horses won it in the mid 1980s: Sadler’s Wells, Pebbles and Dancing Brave, immediately followed by Michael Roberts scoring twice in succession on board Mtoto (**to page 2**)





The Stubbs painting of Eclipse.



Sandown Park on Saturday, everyone else is in the stands.



A painting of Mtoto, the 1988 European Horse Of The Year, with Michael Roberts up.

DAVID ALLAN (...cont)

Mtoto at 4 and 5. That horse had problem feet. Shades of Pocket Power.

Next, in 1989, the impressive Guineas and Derby winner NASHWAN followed up by splitting those trips and taking the Coral-Eclipse at 3 through a huge effort up the Sandown hill chasing a pace-maker who almost got away. NASHWAN's fourth Group 1 was the King George in which he battled again up the less steep Ascot incline to beat CACOETHES, a very good horse who had been named in USA as a yearling – a rarity. The name was MY FRIEND ELVIS. A British syndicate bought him to challenge the Maktoums. They did (challenge) and they did (change the name).

KOOYONGA , a rare female to win the Eclipse did so in 1992 at 4. TWICE OVER won it at 5. A list of modern 3 year old winners includes: GIANT'S CAUSEWAY, ORATORIO, SEA THE STARS and GOLDEN HORN.

Sandown Park, in the smart Surrey town of Esher, south-west of London but not far, is a gorgeous place to go racing. A natural amphitheatre, there are views from the stands across Central London and beyond. The gantry looping over Wembley Stadium is easily visible twenty miles away over the Surrey trees to the other side of the capital.

The vast car parks are managed by attendants who

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Separate these! Ulysess (nearest camera), beats Barney Roy.

DAVID ALLAN (cont fm. p 3)

know the regulars from thousands of others and will “slot you in over there, sir”. But many people arrive by train from London Waterloo. Racegoers wander in haphazard crocodiles across the course from the station, in contrast to other Waterloo race-trains to Ascot where the walk is up a narrowish path, Windsor where they jump on a riverboat (TT Monday Column 15th May 2017) and Kempton with almost no walk at all.

Aside from the Sandown stands, there are terraces and tree-shaded areas in which to sit, all having easy access to pre-parade and parade ring. The course is famous for the “Rhododendron Walk”, alongside which owners hurry to greet also-rans in the unsaddling areas, while the first four home continue downhill to the Winners’ Enclosure in front of the weighing room, another mini-amphitheatre.

Sandown is also a top class jumping course, with four Grade 1s and what was the Whitbread Gold Cup, as won by Arkle. The great Mill House had surrendered his crown to even greater Arkle (TT Monday Column 17th October 2016) and suffered back issues due to his immensity. But with Arkle finished, injured, on an incredible day at Sandown, Mill House came back and won the Whitbread, all 5,784 metres and 24 fences of it, with Sandown in the Swinging Sixties going bonkers.

But back to the Eclipse. Like Ascot Week, last week started with several days of 30+ degree temperatures. By Saturday it was more like 27 or so at Sandown, Wimbledon and Lord’s all within easy distance. The turf was going to ride quick.

Sandown has a steep uphill finish which has accounted for many of its great reversals. It takes some knowing. But “Uphill” helps horses if there is any sting in the ground, contrasting with coming down the hill at Derby speed at Epsom if it’s quick or the scary cross-hurdle at Cheltenham if the March ground is fast.

There was no evidence of discomfort in the blistering Eclipse contest between ULYSSES and BARNEY ROY. It was “All Change” up front as those two overhauled the multiple leaders on the hill and strode clear, ULYSSES having gone the sooner under *(to page 4)*



CLASSIFIEDS: FROM 30 PER DAY





Sundari will have a tilt at title defence.

DAVID ALLAN (from page 3)

Champion Jockey Jim Crowley.

BARNEY ROY – the 3yo St James’s Palace winner - with James Doyle chased him down – well almost – just failing by the proverbial flared nostril. Without pixels, it was a dead heat and perhaps should have been.

ULYSSES, a 4 year old, is trained by Sir Michael Stoute for Flaxman aka the Niarchos family who have had their ups and downs with British Racing. It was good to see Maria Niarchos-Gouazé resplendent in gold greeting the colt by Galileo (Royalty) out of the Niarchos’s own Light Shift (also Royalty). Sir Michael thinks ULYSSES settles better these days and will go a mile and a half perhaps in the King George. A Winner earlier this season of the Group 3 Gordon Richards also at Sandown, then 3rd to HIGHLAND REEL in the Group 1 Prince of Wales at Ascot, both a mile and a quarter, ULYSSES had run in the 2016 Derby first run after his maiden which was a strong statement. He got flattened – twice– in that race where horses get into trouble on the Epsom switchback, but here in the Eclipse he fought as hard as you can imagine in a thrilling finish against a superb 3 year old in BARNEY ROY (by Excelebration out of a Galileo mare) thus a rare Godolphin runner by a Coolmore sire, having been bought second-hand for squillions.

ECLIPSE (by Marske out of a Regulus mare) did his running in 1769 and 1770, giving rise to the phrase that forms the headline of this article. He did not race until 5 years old and his first run was over 4 miles (6,400 metres). He won 18 races unextended, the most celebrated contest being a match race with BUCEPHALUS. - tt.

Sundari will return to defend Kimberley crown

SUNDARI, the son of Fort Wood who was retired not long after his surprise win in last year’s Flamingo Mile, will be back to defend his title on 5 August, when the Kimberley Tourism Board host the annual Flamingo Festival and the Mile will again top the bill.

Trainer Candice Dawson, who put herself on the map when the six-year-stayed on gamely to win last year’s Mile under Karl Zechner, said that her chief patron Lindsay Ralphs had promised her Sundari as a riding horse when he came to the end his career.

“Sundari had two moderate runs on turf after his Flamingo Mile win, he never enjoyed racing on turf, so we retired him last November and for a while he experienced life as a show jumper at a stable in Kyalami.

“But in talking to Nico Kritsiotis one day the idea of bringing Sundari back to defend his crown came about. Lindsay and Kathryn Ralphs think I have lost the plot, but they have supported me with confidence to give it a go.

“We’ve entered Sundari in a sprint handicap over 1200m at the Vaal on Tuesday. Hopefully this will tighten him up for his race in August,” said Dawson.

Sundari has won four of 32 career starts, three of them on sand, winning R342,000 in stakes. - tt.

INVESTIGATION OPENED

The stipendiary stewards of the NHA have opened an investigation into the circumstances which led to MISS CRUSADE (L Govender) and PUMEZA (G Behr) starting from the incorrect stalls in Race 1 at Kenilworth on Saturday.

Pumeza was the favourite and started from stall gate No 11 in the 1000m race, while Miss Crusade should have started from stall gate No 11 but was put in the No 10 stall. Pumeza finished fourth behind 36-1 shot Rebel’s Spirit and many of her supporters expected the result to be declared null and void.

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