

THE DERBY: 1956

Epsom on Derby Day. A spectacle unequalled anywhere, whether it's rain or shine, and this time there was precious little shine. From Duke to dustman the magic of the world's biggest race embraces all. If Prince Monolulu had a horse to beat the favourite something was going to happen to it. But not yetawhile. First it was all the fun of the fair for the hundreds of thousands having a day out on <sup>Epsom Downs.</sup> ~~abandonment~~

The crowd thickened with every minute that passed. It was lunchtime and of you weren't a guest of the stewards you made other arrangements. For all kinds of people half the fun of Derby Day is the <sup>picnic,</sup> ~~pinkie~~ the touch of Epsom that makes the whole world kin.

That pillar of racing, Lord Roseberry, welcomed the Queen Mother <sup>7 to Her Royal</sup> and Princess Margaret. The Queen herself was <sup>about</sup> on the royal ~~ship~~ yacht on the way to Sweden. ~~an~~ Everyone was now counting the minutes till 3.30. Meanwhile a look at the horses; not a vintage lot this year; the Derby the most open it's been for many a long day.

However, good, bad or indifferent as the runners might <sup>be</sup> ~~be~~ bookies and punters did real Derby business.

~~A few minutes~~ <sup>Half an hour</sup> before the Off <sup>it</sup> began to rain. The Queen's horse was Atlas. Nobody expected to see <sup>much of him later</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>at the</sup> post. Induna, in Charlie Smirke's hands, well-fancied.... Roistar, the hope of Ireland and well liked.... Affiliation Order, Lester Piggott up, quite a combination. And the favourite Lavandin himself, W.R. Johnstone in the saddle. A French challenge nobody could disregard. ~~Well, they were some of the field. All of them could now stretch their legs on the way from paddock to starting gate.~~

angè stands)

All 27 came under starter's orders. Mr. Marsh got them smartly away. <sup>In front of</sup> ~~Before~~ them the most gruelling mile-and-a-half in the world. ~~Dr. ... in their faces into the bargain.~~ Induna and Idle Rocks began badly. Already Monterey was well to the front; Stoney Ley and Pirate King his most serious challenge.

Monterey was going as if he had the race in his saddle-bag, <sup>nearly</sup> but no Derby is ever decided at this stage. ~~Enough that~~ ~~Monterey~~ ~~had~~ as they approached Tattenham Corner.

<sup>Tattenham,</sup> As they <sup>came</sup> ~~went~~ round // it was Monterey, ~~was~~ followed by Pirate King, King David and Roistar. Unnoticed in the bunch was Lavandin; plenty of time yet for Epsom expert Bill Johnstone to make his effort.

After the Corner // comes that heart-breaking up-hill run to the finish that kills the hopes of all but the real stayers.

Monterey didn't stay. <sup>And now</sup> ~~But at this stage~~ class told.

Johnstone gave Lavandin his head and the French horse nobly responded. Lavandin was in front.

But it wasn't all over yet. On the outside came Monteval; riding him Freddie Palmer, who rode the Derby winner last year. A terrific struggle between two French horses. Lavandin just held off his rival, to win by a photo finish.

The finish again. And this time exactly how it all happened is shown in slow motion.... It almost looked as if Monteval would have overtaken the favourite in a few more yards but

Bill Johnstone said afterwards it wasn't so; Lavandin had the situation in complete command.... M. Wertheimer led in Lavandin. The photograph said the horse had won by a neck, two lengths separating Monteval and the Irish horse Roistar.... So the cup goes to France again. A sad afternoon for English owners but a wonderful Derby.