

51/48ROYAL ASCOT

It's the gayest Ascot since the war, a triumph of optimism over the weather prophets, with lovely ladies in large and lovely hats tempting the sun and daring the wind ... which, incidentally, blew half a gale between times.

It wouldn't be Ascot without the Aga Khan. His beautiful wife won the first race with "Heren." Cameras had a joy day. This is Madame Mendosa, wife of the Cuban Ambassador. Wherever you look, there's somebody worth looking at. For the first day there's quite a good crowd - if one may use such a term at Ascot. Now the Queen with Princess Elizabeth drives through the beautiful gates, really golden this year for the first time since 1910. Princess Margaret is in the second carriage.

For the big race, the Ascot Stakes, twenty-five will face the starter. It's over two-and-a-half miles, a real stamina test, but at least a dozen are well fancied. What Lord Blandford fancies we don't know ... Meantime, the runners have reached the start.

Passing the stands the first time, they're all going a good gallop. First run in 1839, the Ascot Stakes is the third oldest race of the meeting.

Out in the country, rounding the bend into the straight, it's "Beorn" leading from "Red Stranger."

Now the last 3 furlongs. They're bunched on the rails, and now here's "Royaliste" storming up on the outside. Rickaby's fairly set him alight and it looks as though he's going to win. He's in the lead now ... but he's swerving right across the field ... he's gone right over onto the rails in front of "Guerrier," and Rickaby's driving him home. Here comes "Guerrier" but he'll never catch "Royaliste" ... And at the post it's "Royaliste" a length in front of "Guerrier."

But there's an objection and although "Royaliste" receives the pats and plaudits, the race goes to "Guerrier."