

Musselburgh takes centre stage for New Year's Day racing

The £88,000 Betway New Year's Day meeting at Musselburgh Racecourse will take centre stage following the abandonment of Cheltenham's 1 January fixture due to a waterlogged course.

History-making Bryony Frost heads a list of star names on parade, fresh from her Boxing Day success at Kempton Park when the 25-year-old became the first female jockey to lift the King George VI Chase, scoring on Frodon (a previous winner at Musselburgh's Scottish Cheltenham Trials fixture).

Frost's Grade 1 strike took her ahead of Lucy Alexander to become the winning-most female pilot of all time on a total of 145 victories. Her very first winner was at Musselburgh in 2015 under Rules, and her return on Friday sees her booked for two rides, starting with Accomplice in the Betway Handicap Hurdle (1.20pm).



The same race also welcomes a rare course runner in the shape of Sebastopol for Tom Lacey, as the Herefordshire trainer's only other previous visit was when the same horse won the Scottish County Hurdle in February.

Bryony Frost's other mount is Whiskey Lullaby, also saddled by eleven-time champion trainer Paul Nicholls in the Betway Heed Your Hunch Handicap Hurdle (3.35pm), and she will be hoping

for the same Musselburgh form which led to her landing a treble on the opening card of Scottish Cheltenham Trials weekend in February.

In the Betway Hogmaneigh Handicap Hurdle (1.55pm) – one of two £25,000 feature races on the card – Miranda, third placed in last season's Scottish County Hurdle, is a first Musselburgh mount for amateur rider Angus Cheleda, and the partnership is fresh from a win earlier in December at Ludlow. The Keith Dalglish trained Raymond will be looking for three-in-a-row at Musselburgh following back-to-back wins in November on top of a win at Perth in September.

Champion jockey Brian Hughes in on board the Donald McCain-trained Mount Mews, a Grade 2 hurdle winner in his younger days who sports blinkers for the first time, in the £25,000 Betway Auld Reekie Handicap Chase (3.05pm). Also featuring in this race are Harry and Dan Skelton, who have been in great form over the Festive period and the Warwickshire-based brothers team up with Romain De Senam, already a six-time winner over fences. County Durham trainer Rebecca Menzies has Return Ticket in top order and he was an impressive winner at Musselburgh over two miles in November.



Musselburgh Racecourse general manager Bill Farnsworth

Musselburgh Racecourse general manager, Bill Farnsworth, is hopeful the weather will play its part to kick off 2021 on a high note. He said: "As always for our Betway New Year's Day meeting we have a cracking card lined up with a strong showing from many leading trainers.

"In normal times we would be welcoming a boisterous crowd of more than 5,000 but due to Covid-19 the meeting takes place behind closed doors, but that does not detract from the quality of racing being staged.

"It is important that as we find a way out of this pandemic that we continue to support the wider horseracing industry, and we are indebted to Betway for their loyalty and who continue to play an important part by sponsoring this well-established fixture.

"The weather this week has been slightly unpredictable with various forecasting models laying out different scenarios, but we are hopeful the cards will fall in the right place and racing will go ahead."

Betway PR Manager, Chad Yeomans, said: "What a superb card we've got in store – there isn't a better way to start a New Year than with the Betway New Year's Day fixture at Musselburgh.

"With great field sizes, we're promised exciting and competitive racing and it's brilliant to see trainers such as Paul Nicholls, Tom Lacey and the red-hot Dan Skelton sending a host of horses up to support the meeting. All of us at Betway want to extend our thanks to Musselburgh racecourse and we wish everyone a Happy New Year."

Racegoers unable to watch the action live at Musselburgh can bring in New Year racing with coverage from ITV1 from 1pm and on subscription channel Racing TV.

Winners of a social media competition run by Betway,

Musselburgh Racecourse and ITV, all received a luxury hamper of goods delivered for them to enjoy while watching the racing from home.

For racing updates follow the official [Musselburgh Racecourse website](#) and [Twitter](#) and [Facebook accounts](#) and to check the [latest going visit here.](#)