

Dolos could return for the end-of-season Celebration Chase after a good win in handicap company, while there was another lucrative winner for jockey Harry Cobden 24 hours later as Thyme White took the Listed bet365 Scottish Triumph Hurdle.

It is never a smart idea to underestimate a Christian Williams runner, as the popular former jockey, who trains his horses on the beach near

Bridgend, has proved with Potters Corner in both the Welsh and Midlands Nationals.

In the day's richest prize, the Grade Three Heroes Handicap Hurdle, he turned again to his crack amateur Jack Tudor, whose priceless 5lb claim proved decisive for Limited Reserve's prospects in the same Potters Corner colours.

"It never feels like he handles that [heavy] ground, but he's good and tough," said Jack.

BATTLE OF THE BAILEYS

WETHERBY also staged one of its showpiece meetings of the calendar, although the result of the feature William Hill Towton Novices' Chase was a shade unsatisfactory. In a battle of the Baileys, trainer Caroline Bailey's Boldmere looked well in command before tumbling over the last and handing it to the Kim Bailey runner Newtide.

TALKING POINT

The faller, who was reported none the worse for wear the following morning, will surely have a big staying race in him somewhere down the line.



Limited Reserve (Jack Tudor, left) takes the Betway Heroes Handicap Hurdle for trainer Christian Williams

Old favourite thrills the crowds

The Willie Mullins-trained Faugheen comes up trumps at Leopardstown

Dublin Racing Festival, Leopardstown, Ireland

THE Dublin Racing Festival featured an array of home-grown stars and two of Ireland's principal jump races, but there is nothing quite like an old favourite to get the crowd going.

Little over a year ago on the same Leopardstown track, Faugheen's future looked in the balance when he was on the

ground after a heavy fall in the Christmas Hurdle before being led away gingerly, and the former Champion Hurdle hero looked a shell of himself for most of last season.

Willie Mullins took the decision to put him over fences on the eve of his 12th birthday and he has been an absolute revelation, swatting away the gilded Samcro at Limerick. On Sunday, in the Flogas Novice Chase, he

prompted deafening roars as he thwarted stablemate Easy Game, a rival half his age, with guts and determination.

Even his multiple champion trainer, who won two of the other Grade One prizes with exciting novice hurdler Asterion Forlonge and classy chaser Chacun Pour Soi, was emotional.

"I thought it was probably one of the best, most special winners I've had," said Willie. "Coming

here, I was worried he'd have a bad fall or be injured, but he just comes up trumps."

Even the feature Paddy Power Irish Gold Cup found itself a little overshadowed despite developing into a thriller. It went to Gordon Elliott's Delta Work, Ireland's best staying novice last year, who confirmed placings with many of the same horses from the Savills Chase at Christmas and will command a good deal of respect in the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

Saturday's card belonged to Rachael Blackmore, whose Grade One double was capped by a gritty effort from the marvellous and unbeaten Honeysuckle on her first try at the minimum distance for some time in the PCI Irish Champion Hurdle.

"She has a massive heart and a massive will to do it," said Rachael, while trainer Henry de Bromhead and connections now have the interesting choice between the Champion Hurdle and keeping her in mares only company. **H&H**



Paul Townend celebrates aboard Faugheen with lad John Codd



Left: Jack Kennedy pilots Delta Work to top spot in the Paddy Power Irish Gold Cup