

Cartmel

Location, Parking and Access



Cartmel is a delightful little village in the Lake District and it is not designed to take the large influx of cars on raceday. The rule is arrive as early as possible ... those in the know will arrive early morning for afternoon meetings and by lunchtime for evening meetings. Indeed for afternoon meetings the first arrivals frequently reach the course at seven in the morning. The course is well signposted from all the nearby major roads. Access is via country lanes and a one way system is set up to ensure traffic flow. Make sure you follow the signposted routes, do not try and be clever and devise your own route to the course, the chances are you will not be allowed to get there.

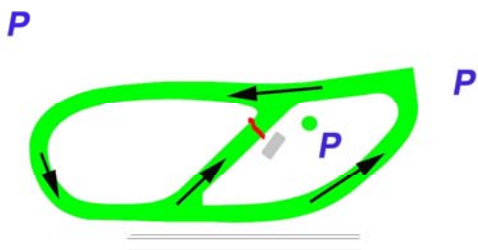
Parking is in the centre of the course and which car park you use will depend on which enclosure you are in ... again follow the signs. There are overspill car parks for when the centre course parking fills up.

When leaving the racing a signposted one way system is implemented, as upon arrival don't try and be clever by taking shortcuts, you will not save time.

The golden rule for going to Cartmel is to accept it is out of the way and that you will possibly have to queue in traffic. As another incentive to arrive early the first people to arrive get the prime parking spaces alongside the track.

The nearest railway stations are Cark in Cartmel or Grange over Sands (on the Lancaster – Barrow line). There is a raceday bus service from Cark.

Course Layout



A jumps only course, the circuit is only 1 mile 1 furlong round with a spur dissecting the course, which is used as the finishing straight.

The run in from the final fence to the finishing line is almost half a mile in length, one of the longest in the country.

Cartmel's tight configuration, coupled with its flat nature, means it suits nippy handy types rather than dour stayers.

Admission

Apart from the July meeting which has a single enclosure (£15), Cartmel operates a dual enclosure policy with the Paddock enclosure costing £20 and the course enclosure £10.

Annual membership: Hill & Stream enclosure £300 (double), £205 (single) – renewing members only. Paddock enclosure £95.

Domestic Gazebos can be erected for a £10 charge.

Discounts: Seniors Disabled Group

Overview

Both enclosures and, consequently all the viewing, is in the centre of the course. The paddock enclosure has a Grandstand but to be totally frank it does little to improve viewing. It offers tiered viewing on the lower levels. The upper level is reserved for restaurant patrons, owners and trainers. Having said that even at the lofty heights viewing is not that brilliant.

The bottom line is there is nowhere in the course where the entire race can be viewed. 99% of racegoers view the racing from ground level and depending where you are standing you can see up to about half the course at best. There is a big screen to assist following the racing. Iain McKenzie is the regular course commentator and knowing the constraints he does provide a more 'radio style' commentary, painting a picture of what is happening for those who cannot see the action.

The 'trick' at Carmel is to watch each race from a different position. During the race the horses run round the outside of the course and on the final circuit they divert along the home 'straight' which effectively dissects the course.



As someone who likes to watch an entire race develop, Cartmel is the sort

of course I should hate, as it is only possible to see a small part of any given race live. Viewers watching at home will certainly seem more of the action than anybody at the course. However I love going racing at Cartmel and looking at the crowds that flock to their limited number fixtures every year it is clear I am not the only one. 30,000 attended the 2007 August Bank Holiday meeting.

By having so few fixtures Cartmel is certainly following the philosophy of leaving them wanting more. Having said that any more racing would be impractical. Cartmel village is beautiful (and well worth a visit in its own right) but very small village and the influx of racegoers does have a major impact on the locals, OK it brings in a great deal of money but there is clearly a fine line which the course has balanced very carefully.

The meetings at Cartmel are the nearest you will get to Point-to-Point racing at a 'mainstream' racecourse. It is a family day out with the key being 'day out', for the afternoon meetings the first racegoers arrive around breakfast time and for the evening meeting they start to arrive around lunchtime.

By arriving early you stand a chance of securing a prime parking position by the running rail. (By arriving at 12:00 for the evening meeting I was able to park right by the open ditch). Racegoers, for a £10 supplement, can set up gazebos (there are restrictions near fences) adding to the party atmosphere. Having arrived early the next course of action is to walk around the enclosures and then set off to explore the village ... as you leave the course get your hand stamped and come and go as you please.

It has to be said it can become somewhat uncomfortable when the weather is wet, make sure you dress for the weather.

Racing is not of the highest quality but it can be competitive all the same.

There are some 'purists' who will look down at Cartmel ... that is a pity. It is a fantastic experience and anyone who loves racing, especially jump racing, must visit Cartmel at least once and I would wager that having been once you will want to go again.

Catering

There is a restaurant in the grandstand offering a package for £110 (including admission), including a three course lunch and afternoon tea. Tables seat 10, so if you are in a smaller group you will have to share a table.

The Grill Restaurant, new for 2010, is located in the corporate marquee area of the Paddock enclosure, prices £65 a head.

There is the Chasers Restaurant based in a marquee in the paddock enclosure, offering a buffet lunch for £29.95 a head, admission not included.

Elsewhere all catering is mobile. There are some units in the paddock enclosure, although most are located on the course side. (Not a major issue as crossing between enclosures is permitted for paddock badge holders.)

Food is relatively cheap. An excellent roast beef bap was available for £5, burgers were £3.50 (£3.50 with cheese), fish and chips £5.70. Hot baguettes were £5.50. Pie and peas £3.50 and jacket potatoes £2.50.

Pimms was £20 for a jug, bitter and lager £3.50. Water was £1.50 a bottle.

Right that is the official food offering and there are very few queues because what happens in reality is that most racegoers bring their own food and have picnics and barbies. Cartmel is one of the few courses which have very few restrictions on racegoers bringing their own food into the course. You can see all types of DIY feasting from sandwiches through to grand banquets. If you can't be bothered to make your own feast then visit Cartmel Village store which has an excellent deli counter.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

About 20 bookmakers ply their trade either side of the course. Not the most generous of layers they average 1.85% per runner.

Racecard

£2.50 good value for money with all the necessary information and a review of last seasons racing.

Toilets

Apart from limited facilities in the grandstand, which did smell a bit, mobile units are bought in for the day and yes there are invariably very long queues, even for the gents.

Parade Ring

Small and basic is probably the best assessment of Cartmel's paddock. Situated on the paddock side of the course it isn't accessible from the course enclosure. The winners enclosure is situated at the Grandstand end of the parade ring. There is no seating but some temporary tiered viewing is provided.

Non Racing Attractions

Located at the south end of the Lake District some of the most beautiful scenery in the country is close to hand. However take a look round Cartmel itself – it is a lovely village and the Priory is also well worth a visit.

Contact Details	
	www.cartmel-racecourse.co.uk
	01539 536340
	Cartmel Racecourse Cartmel Grange-over-Sands Cumbria LA11 6QF

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012
Cartmel have been approached for permission to list their fixtures in this section of the web site.
As yet they have not responded to several requests therefore, for copyright reasons, it is not possible to provide dates of their fixtures here.

Inspection Dates		
Date	Weather	Type
27/05/06	Overcast with some showers	6 jump evening
26/05/07	Warm and sunny	6 jump evening
17/07/08	Wet and overcast	7 jump midweek
23/05/09	Cloudy with sunny spells	6 jump evening
29/05/10	Wet	7 jump evening
14/07/11	Hot and sunny	7 jump midweek