

Catterick Bridge

Location, Parking and Access

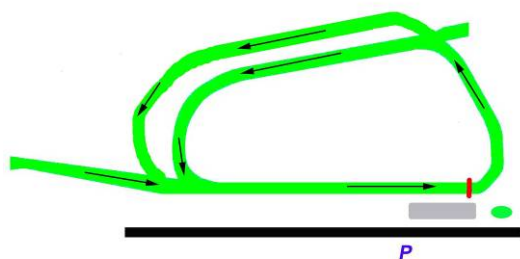


Situated 14 miles south of Darlington, Catterick racecourse is adjacent to the A1 with relatively easy road access.

Parking is free and on grass. The car park is across the road from the racecourse entrance. The only gripe is that crossing the road to return to the car park after racing is a risky business, especially if you are less than fleet footed. Perhaps a police controlled crossing point would assist?

Access by public transport isn't that easy with the nearest railway station being at Darlington, some 14 miles away. From there it is a bus journey of about 45 minutes, buses do stop outside the racecourse. Train times to Darlington are London 2½ hours, York 35 mins, Newcastle 35 mins.

Course Layout



The racetrack effectively consists of two circular tracks, sharing the same home straight. The inner circuit is used for flat racing and is just over 1 mile 1 furlong in length whilst the outer track is used for jump racing. There is an extension to the home straight to allow straight 5 furlong races to be run on the flat. The course has tight bends and is undulating throughout. The track is left handed, meaning the horses race anti-clockwise. Catterick is one of the best tracks in the country for backing favourites in flat races, almost 40% of favourites win here but is one of the worse for favourites in jump races, with only 33% obliging.

The course favours front running types with short strides whose forte is speed rather than stamina.

The free draining nature of the course means the course is rarely heavy.

Draw Advantage: When the ground is testing high numbers have an advantage in 5f races, otherwise low numbers have an advantage over 5f.

Admission

Catterick operates a two enclosure policy. The main enclosure is £14 with the course enclosure a very reasonable £4.

Annual membership: Single £120, joint with spouse £200, joint with friend £210.

There is no published dress code for the course.

Discounts: Seniors Disabled Group

Overview

I have mixed views on the merits of first impressions, usually I am pretty good in my intuition. I have to say with Catterick that my first impressions were wrong.

My initial impressions were that it had a sad, almost dilapidated feel about it and it certainly could do with a lick of paint, but the more I explored the course the more I grew to like it. It also shows there is more to a successful racecourse than a lick of paint.

The welcome is generally good and the staff, on the whole, are a friendly bunch.



Catterick has joined the growing number of courses which now offer a combined main enclosure.

There is some seating on benches at ground level, however there is no seating in the stands themselves. Access to the stands is good, the stepplings are of a reasonable height and are about 75% under cover. The front of the enclosure is all concrete with no lawns.

The old Tattersalls stand is similar to the old members stand, with adequate access and slightly more cover. The course enclosure is a flat area in the centre of the course.

I have to say though, the best viewing comes from the roof of the paddock restaurant which gives excellent views of the entire course. It has only one disadvantage in that it is situated beyond the winning post and is slightly head on to the finishing straight, however the big screen can be used to see the finish more clearly. You are at the mercy of the elements, however provided the weather is kind it is an excellent vantage point, with the added benefit of strolling to the rear of the roof giving you a birds eye view of the parade ring.

Viewing from the stands is adequate although in the centre of the course viewing of a race is likely to be very restricted.

One is left with the impression that Catterick is a locals course and a course the locals would guard with pride.

I have to admit that I was, perhaps, overly critical of Catterick when I first reviewed the course. Now I spend more time visiting many, varied, courses I look at Catterick in a new light.

If you visit expecting a York or Ascot you will be disappointed, but Catterick makes has no pretensions of being such.

All in all Catterick sums up exactly what a small racecourse should be, down to earth and friendly more importantly well worth a visit.

I have been fortunate in that all my visits to Catterick have been on sunny days. I am told, by those in the know, that the winter meetings, in the cold, can be bleak affairs.

Catering

Lets be honest if you go racing at Catterick you aren't going there expecting Michelin star rated cooking, what you will get, however, is good homemade fare, cooked to a reasonable standard, served efficiently and quickly and very good value for money.

There is a restaurant offering a reasonably priced a la carte menu, unfortunately it is located on the "wrong side" of the paddock and it affords no viewing of the racing. It offers an a la carté menu. Starters are £2.60 - £5.30, mains £8.95 - £13.95 and desserts £3.60.

The Gods Solution Bar used to have an olde worlde cosy feel but has been upgraded to be more airy feel.

There are the ubiquitous mobile units including fish and chips for £5.50 and burgers for £3.30. The highlight was a well stocked sweet kiosk with fantastic range of 'old fashioned' sweets at reasonable prices.

It is possible to buy sandwiches at prices ranging from £2.00 to £2.40. A selection of hot meals are available at £5.50 to £5.95. Hot filled rolls are available for £4.50

Bitter was £3.30 and lager £3.40 a pint and water at £1.50 for 500ml.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

About 25 bookmakers were standing in the main enclosure and another five in the centre of the course. Betting was to an over round of 1.74% a runner.

Racecard

Since my initial visit in 2006 the racecard has certainly improved.

Costing only £2 it has all the information required for the afternoons fare.

There was also a good, full colour, review of the previous meeting

Toilets

On the whole the toilets are good, adequately sized and generally clean.

The one exception are the gents urinals near the paddock. This is basically a bricked off area with no roof. So you get wet if it rains and on a hot day, as when inspected, it smelt less than appealing. Also there was no soap available at the wash basins.

Parade Ring

In a way the parade ring is the focal point of the racecourse, it's certainly the most attractive part. It also doubles as a pre-parade ring. It's well tended with viewing almost all the way around the paddock, it has an intimate feel and you get a good 'up close' view of the horses.



The winners enclosure is adjacent to the main stand.

Non Racing Attractions

Catterick itself is a rather non-descript town. However it is in striking distance of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales and the historic towns of Richmond and Harrogate are within easy reach.

Contact Details	
	www.catterickbridge.co.uk
	01748 811478
	The Catterick Racecourse Co Ltd Catterick Bridge Richmond North Yorkshire DL10 7PE

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012
Catterick have declined to give permission for their fixtures to be included in the review.

Inspection Dates		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
19/07/06	Very hot and sunny	6 flat midweek
02/07/08	Overcast and muggy	6 flat midweek
01/07/09	Hot and sunny	6 flat midweek
30/06/10	Hot and sunny	6 flat midweek