

Exeter

Location, Parking and Access

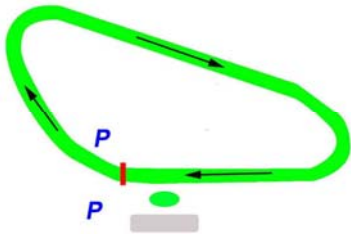


Located eight miles south of the city, it is adjacent to the A38 Exeter to Plymouth road, 5 miles from the end of the M5.

Parking is in the centre of the course, with the resultant bottleneck when leaving. However there is marshalling on exiting the car park, which helps alleviate the 'free for all' often found at other courses. The only minor gripe with the exit system is priority appears to be given to coaches and annual members, neither of whom park centre course.

The nearest station is Exeter (two hours from London Paddington) and a free bus links the station and the racecourse on racedays.

Course Layout



Exeter stages jump racing only. It is a right handed (clockwise) course of about 2 miles. It is very undulating and the final 250 yards is uphill.

The configuration of the track does not suit galloping horses and it pays to look for course specialists.

The 300 yard uphill run-in is particularly trying and tight finishes are not unknown

Admission

There are two enclosures Premier (£18) and Grandstand (£13).

There is no mention of concessions for seniors or groups, although some all inclusive packages are available for most meetings.

Annual membership: £180

In line with most other courses, accompanied under 16's are admitted free.

Overview

Two things strike you when arriving at Exeter, one is how compact the enclosures are and the other how big the course itself is.

The fact the main A38 trunk route is situated behind the stands does constrain the course somewhat.

The enclosures contain a hotchpotch of buildings. The Premier enclosure does not have an outside viewing stand as such and on first impression you do ask yourself what is the point of paying the extra money. The benefit is hidden inside the Haldon Stand itself. The ground floor is a bar / eatery. Very popular, perhaps too popular as there is a good range of hot food on offer, but almost nowhere to sit and eat it. There are plenty of tables but they are, in the main, taken by racegoers who are not eating and drinking. Then again that is not a problem exclusive to Exeter.

The real gem is found upstairs. The first floor is a glass fronted area complete with tiered seating offering good views of the course, protected from the elements.



The Grandstand enclosure has two open stands. One adjacent to the Haldon Stand offers tiered viewing, mostly under cover, although the exit from the home straight is obscured if standing at the top of the steppings. The steppings themselves are relatively deep and not too high, although the bottom step a bit high. The other stand fronts the Brockman hall and again offers tiered, standing, viewing all under cover. There is a single row of seats at the rear. There are a few pillars which obstruct the view slightly, but nothing insurmountable with a bit of head bobbing.

Exeter is a very undulating track, as a consequence naked eye viewing of the all track is not possible anywhere. The most noticeable blind spot being the first furlong or so of the back straight which is in a dip hidden by shrubbery. There is a lesser blind spot coming out of the back straight. However there is a big screen showing all the action.

There is also a good viewing stand placed adjacent to the final chase jump.

As I said, Exeter is a very compact course and the day of the inspection was Haldon Gold Cup day, one of the busiest days of the year at the course. It was busy and crowded, however it was not so busy that you could not get around or that you felt overly uncomfortable.

The staff were, without exception, friendly and welcoming.

Exeter is what I call a "real" National Hunt course, with no airs and graces and a knowledgeable loyal following. For a 'small' course Exeter attracts a large number of quality horses. A great day out.

The only minor gripes being the centre course parking and the lack of a watering system, which does mean small fields when the weather has been dry for a while. But don't let that put you off – even the small fields the day I went produced some exciting racing.

Catering

The main restaurant is the Desert Orchid restaurant and I can vouch, from a previous visit, it is good value at £51.30 (plus VAT) for an excellent three course lunch, including admission. Situated on the first floor of the Haldon Stand it offers good viewing of the course. Elsewhere there are plenty of eating opportunities and only one ubiquitous mobile unit!!

In the Premier enclosure, the Best Mate bar offers a range of hot meals for £5.90 (£7.50 for the roast). Choices include two choices of roast, lasagne, fish and chips, ham egg and chips. A Devon cream tea is also available for £3.50.

In the Grandstand enclosure both the Romany King and Brockman bars offer food selections, again main meals for £5.90. Also soup for £2.20, sandwiches (£2.10 - £2.70).

In addition there was a small marquee offering pasty's, sausage rolls, cream teas and tea and coffee.

The mobile unit had various combinations of bacon, sausages, burgers, eggs etc, all reasonably priced.

Bitter was available at £2.70 and lager £3.00

All in all a reasonable selection of food, but more importantly very reasonably priced.

My only minor gripe is I could not find a confectionary vendor – which was a pain as I needed a chocolate fix mid-afternoon.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were 24 bookmakers standing, betting to an over round of 1.8% a runner, not that generous.

Racecard

Costing £2.50 and not particularly large the first thing that struck you was the amount of advertising contained within, 33% was advertising.

There was not much else in addition to the race details, seeing this is the courses biggest race of the year some editorial background to the race would not have been out of place in the racecard.

Toilets

Considering the crowds the toilets coped very well, although an additional portable facility had been bought in for the day. Indeed the only queues I saw were the usual post racing empty out.

Parade Ring



Spartan is probably the kindest description. Located in front and one side of the stands it is not particularly large and it gets very crowded. It has some button seating.

It does look drab though and it would only take a few strategically place flower beds to make it more attractive. The winners enclosure is contained within the parade ring.

The pre-parade ring is situated just beyond the ring.

Non Racing Attractions

Need I say anything, we are talking Devon here – delightful scenery, beaches, fishing villages etc. etc.

Contact Details

	www.exeter-racecourse.co.uk
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Ownership	Jockey Club
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Fixtures 2012

January 1st
February 12th
March 6th & 20th
April 4th & 17th
May 1st & 8th (eve)
October 11th & 23rd
November 6th , 14th & 25th
December 7th & 20th

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
06/11/07	Sunny becoming overcast later on	6 jump midweek feature meeting
14/05/08	Sunny with a light shower mid afternoon	7 jump midweek afternoon
12/05/10	Sunny with a chilly breeze, becoming showery	6 jump midweek

