

Ffos Las

Location, Parking and Access



The course web site suggests the course is 5 miles from Llanelli. However if you follow the brown signs it is a good ten mile journey.

Visitors coming from across the border from England may also be surprised how far into Wales the course is, however don't let the location be a deterrent.

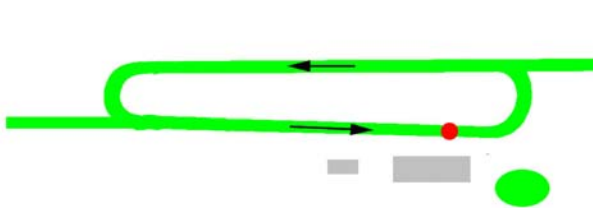
Once you leave the M4 and are beyond Llanelli the roads become more rural the nearer to the course you get, however traffic did seem to flow, although there were queues to leave the course after racing.

Interestingly my sat-nav sent me back to the M4 on a route which contradicted the local road signs and it seemed to be much quicker than the route when I arrived, dutifully following the brown signs.

There is plenty of free parking on a mixture of cinder and grass surfaces.

By public transport the course is not that easy to get to. Trains run to Llanelli Station and Kidwelly from which a taxi is required. Or there is a bus (Monday – Saturday) between Llanelli and Carmarthen which stops outside the course.

Course Layout



Ffos Las is a very flat track, left handed (anti-clockwise) of just under 1m 5f in circumference. It looks to be a very well drained, galloping track.

There is a spur on the home straight to allow races up to six furlongs and a spur on the back straight for 1m 4f starts on the flat.

The course stages both flat and national hunt racing.

Until there have been a number of meetings it is not possible to discern any draw bias.

Admission

There is a single enclosure policy at Ffos Las with tickets costing either £18 or £20 depending on the meeting.

Annual membership for 2011: £250

Accompanied under 16's are admitted free.

Discounts: Seniors Disabled Students Group

Overview

Ffos Las, Britain's first new turf racecourse for over 80 years, serves a part of the country bereft of live racing and it has certainly attracted a great deal of local support.

Travelling from further afield it cannot be denied it is quite a trek, as one of my press room colleagues commented "it is rather depressing driving past Cardiff, looking at the sat-nav and seeing you still have 70 miles to go."

However if you persevere with the journey you will not be disappointed and the experience is generally good.

There were a few teething problems when I first visited the course, but that was only their second ever meeting. When I revisited at their fourth meeting the problems had all but disappeared.

The course is built in a reclaimed open cast mine and is almost Cheltenhamesque, in being surrounded by hills and being set in a natural amphitheatre. It can be a little but depressing when the weather closes in but when the sun shines it is an absolute delight.

There is a single stand with tiered viewing and hospitality boxes and a restaurant on the upper level. The sides are open leaving the stand exposed to wind and rain. That said viewing from the stand is excellent, with the entire track visible. There is no seating in the stand, indeed there is little seating in evidence anywhere at the track.

Inside the stand is a betting hall and bar.

There is a stand alone bar, The real McCoy Bar, which is an open sided building slightly away from the main stand. This contains a bar, grill and, surprisingly on the day of the visit a bouncy castle, which seems an odd combination. I heard more than one adverse comment about the number of children in the bar area. I think, however it may be a feature of the meeting I attended, which was billed as a family fun day and I suspect the bouncy castle was located indoors do to the inclement weather.

Indeed at the second visit when it was sunny all the "attractions" had

moved outside.

The area in front of the main stand is tarmac with reasonable, but not perfect, viewing of the track.

When I first reviewed the course there were several areas that needed improving. I am so pleased, yet unsurprised to report, these have all been addressed.

It is somehow ironic my second visit to the course happened to be a replacement fixture for the seemingly now defunct Great Leighs. I am no soothsayer, however I am absolutely confident Ffos Las will not suffer the same fate as its Essex counterpart.

From a racing perspective the track has, rightly, been universally acclaimed by industry professionals. It looks to be a fair track and is bound to attract some decent runners as it becomes established.

If you live locally treasure your new course. If you live further afield make the effort to visit the course, it is worth the effort and I promise you that you will not be disappointed in the least.

Catering

The crown jewel is the 150 seater Bridles Restaurant, at £58 (£65 on 21st December), the package includes a three course meal, admission and racecard, there is a balcony offering viewing across the track.

Elsewhere the choices are a bit limited. There is a grill in The Real McCoy Bar which had barbequed Steak (£5), Burgers (£4.25) and Chicken (£5).

Elsewhere there is a reliance on the ubiquitous mobile units selling the usual burgers, fish and chips, hog roast and beef rolls and baps (although they had run out of beef by the third race). There did not seem to be too much on offer for the more health conscious or vegetarians.

There were long queues at the bars throughout the afternoon.

Interestingly there seemed to be two different prices for beer and lager, In The Real McCoy bar bitter and lager was £3 a pint yet in the Blinkers Bar they were both £2.90 a pint.

Bottled water was available for a very reasonable £1.

<p>Ancillaries</p> <p>Betting</p> <p>14 bookmakers were standing, although they were betting to an incredibly mean over round of 2.4% a runner.</p>
<p>Racecard</p> <p>A standard Northern Racing racecard, costing £3. Light on editorial but it served its purpose. Perhaps something on the development of the track would not have gone amiss.</p> <p>The was a glossary explaining racing jargon. However with there being a large number of first time racegoers at the meeting they possibly missed a trick by not including a beginners guide or even something on how to place a bet.</p>
<p>Toilets</p> <p>Although some additional temporary facilities were provide they were not enough and there were queues, even in the gents. Goodness knows what the ladies were like.</p> <p>Again this may be due to the exceptionally large numbers.</p> <p>One nice touch was a child height urinal in the main gents – very thoughtful.</p>

<p>Non Racing Attractions</p> <p>Situated at the gateway to west Wales there is stunning scenery nearby as well as many historic towns and cities in the region.</p> <p>Swansea is not that far away, nor is the Gower.</p>
--

Contact Details	
	www.ffoslasracecourse.com
	01554 811092
	Ffos Las Racecourse, Trimsaran, SA17 4DE

Ownership	Private but operated by Northern Racing
------------------	---

Fixtures 2012

Jump

January 11th & 29th

February 4th & 19th

March 17th & 29th

April 15th & 23rd (eve)

May 9th (eve) & 31st

June 5th & 21st (eve)

August 23rd

October 14th

November 11th & 23rd

December 17th & 26th

Mixed

August 28th

Flat

July 2nd (eve) , 17th & 24th

August 2nd & 13th

September 9th & 16th

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
21/07/09	Wet, clearing with late sunshine	7 flat midweek
12/09/09	Hot and sunny	8 flat weekend