

Newmarket - July

Location, Parking and Access

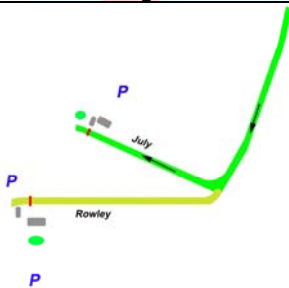


Located 14 miles from Cambridge the course is well signposted from a fair distance away. Follow the yellow racecourse signs as they will take you away from the town centre and extra congestion.

Parking is on grass and there is a free public car park or a premier car park for a £5 charge. Both are on grass. The premier car park is close to the Premier enclosure entrance, however that is the only advantage. When leaving you end up merging and competing with the public car park cars so it is questionable if the £5 charge is actually worth it.

Access by public transport is not easy with only a limited rail service to Newmarket itself. There is a subsidised coach service from Cambridge Station (£3 single £5 return) and Stansted Airport (£6 single £10 return)

Course Layout



The July course is a boomerang shape with a right handed dog-leg 1¼ miles from the finish. Generally flat with a slight rise two furlongs out. Races of 1m 2f and longer involve a right handed dog leg.

A very fair, wide course, galloping horses are favoured.

Admission

There is a three enclosure policy, Members (£25 - £43), Grandstand (£16 - £21) and Family £10 (not open all meetings). Accompanied under 16's admitted free to all meetings, except Newmarket Nights.

Finally the "Newmarket Nights" series, featuring racing, followed by a top name concert charge between £25 - £32 for Members, £18 - £22 for Grandstand and £8 - £11 for the Family enclosure.

Annual membership: New £425, renewal £400. Junior (under 25 on 13/04/12) New £235 and renewal £190

Discounts: Seniors Group

Overview

There are three enclosures at most meetings (only two at the July festival). The biggest enclosure is the Members enclosure which has a large lawned area in front of 2½ stands (one is shared with the main enclosure).



The two main stands have steep tiers which double up as bench seats and cushions are supplied to make the seating more comfortable. The stewarding is very good which means that people are quickly prevented from standing in gangways making it possible to watch the racing without having to stand. There is a standing area at the rear of one of the stands.

There is a head-on stand (which is shared with the main enclosure) and, as its name implies, provides a head-on view of the racing. This stand is standing only.

There are plenty of garden benches on the lawn and unlike many other courses people tend not hog them for the entire afternoon so there is usually an opportunity to rest your weary legs.

The main enclosure has a similarly configured main stand in the Members area with steppings that double up as seats, however without the benefit of cushions. There is a second, open, seated area however this is situated almost 1½ furlongs from the finishing line. There are also some bench seats on the lawn. The main enclosure visitors do also have access to one half of the head on stand as well.



The garden or family enclosure offers basic facilities and has no access to the parade ring.

Viewing at the July course is as good as it can be, taking into account the physical configuration of the course. Races up to 1 mile are run on the straight course and are invariably viewed head-on to a greater or lesser extent. Races over a mile, start on the dog leg and cannot be viewed from the enclosures until the runners are about a furlong from the turn and only then with decent binoculars. Having said that there are three big screens on the course and one behind the stands, additionally there are a number of televisions in the stands themselves so the course executive recognise the problems and do all they can to mitigate them.

It is a very long time since I have walked into a racecourse and thought "Wow" - however walking into the July course, following the completion of phase one of its refurbishment, that was my immediate reaction.

The July course at Newmarket lends itself to summer racing, it has a relaxed atmosphere and although space is restricted it still manages to have an open spacious feel.

Viewing is always a contentious point at both Newmarket courses and to their credit plenty of televisions have been installed to help overcome the problem. What was slightly frustrating is the lighting rigs from the semi-permanent stage does obstruct viewing from the rear of premier stand nearest the winning post.

On the subject of the stage the day of one the inspections was Classic FM day and there was entertainment between races. A good idea, however the performers were starting their sets even before the official result had been announced and those in the premier stand had the result announcements drowned out by the singers I know I was not the only one to be really annoyed by this.

However the grips are minor ones and they should not be allowed to detract from the excellent points of the course. It is well looked after with well tended gardens and hanging baskets. It has a fantastic atmosphere and I cannot think of anywhere more pleasant to spend a summers

afternoon or evening.

I suppose I cannot complete the review without mentioning the Newmarket nights meetings, held most Friday nights in July and August where big name acts perform after racing. However these evenings are invariably popular and advance booking is highly recommended as they frequently sell out.

Catering

The primary restaurant is The Summer House, a conservatory at the rear of the main stand. This does not offer viewing of the course and packages are available from £92.50 per person.

There are eating facilities at the July Course to cater for all tastes. Ranging from stylish bistro's offering starters from £5.50 - £6.95 and mains from £14.95 - £19.95, to the ubiquitous burger vans with all tastes in between catered for as well.

The Powters Newmarket Sausage stand has survived the refurbishment and it still proves to be one of the most popular outlets offering chilli sausage baguettes for £4.50 and bangers (no ordinary bangers) and mash for £6.50. Sandwiches were available for around £3 - £3.50. The seafood bar offered, amongst other selections, dressed crab for £6.50, hot filo prawns £4.50 and various fish sandwiches for £3.50.

The mobile units covered all tastes from chicken nuggets through to gourmet burgers, via fish and chips and noodles with prices generally around the £5 to £9 mark. For the healthier eaters there was a jacket potato stall with a basic price of £3.80 plus 50p per filling.

Bitter and lager were £4.

All in all a good range of food. The prices are on the higher side compared with some other courses, however the range of choice is exceptional.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

Not surprisingly a large number of bookmakers in attendance, just over 50 of them. They were betting to an over round of 1.15% a runner (although this figure was helped by one race where they were betting to a broke book of 14%), excluding this anomaly, the average over round was 1.6% a runner

Racecard

As would be expected at big meeting at a top course, the bumper racecard with a good combination of information and editorial content.

There was an index to the contents, although it did not appear until page seven. There was a good full colour course guide, followed by the usual important information pages.

There was even a crossword, just in case you got bored during the afternoon!!! There was a two page feature on Irish trainer Ger Lyons and no less than four pages previewing the big race of the afternoon.

Details of the races themselves were clear and for the feature race there were photographs of the jockeys.

All in all an excellent racecard and one where you actually don't mind paying the £3 asking price.

Toilets

Having recently undergone a full refurbishment the toilets were exemplary, were very clean and there were plenty of them.

Parade Ring



Arguably one of the most delightful parade rings in the country. It is large, surrounded by well tended flower beds and is invariably very popular. Other courses take note!! There is plenty of button style seating and tiered viewing.

The winners enclosure is situated next to the thatched weighing room and is actually quite intimate. It is interesting that the presentation for the feature race took place in the parade ring rather than the winners enclosure.

Non Racing Attractions

First of all a racing attraction. Newmarket town plays host to the excellent horseracing museum, which is well worth a visit – racing fanatic or not. There is a chance to ride on a racehorse simulator – I admire the jocks even more having tried it. Or if you fancy yourself as the next Simon Holt you can even try your hand at being a commentator.

Elsewhere Cambridge and its historic Universities is not too far away.

Contact Details

	www.newmarketracecourses.co.uk
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Ownership	Jockey Club
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Fixtures 2012

June 8th, 9th, 22nd (eve), 23rd, 29th (eve) & 30th
July 12th, 13th & 14th (July Meeting)
July 20th (eve), 21st, 27th (eve) & 28th
August 3rd (eve), 4th, 10th (eve), 11th, 16th, 17th (eve), 18th, 24th & 25th

Inspection Dates

Date	Weather	Type
11/07/07	Sunny, clouding over later on	8 (plus 1 Arab) midweek festival
9-11/07/08	Very wet on Wednesday, sunny Thursday and changeable Friday	7 flat each day midweek festival
27/06/09	Light shower early, becoming sunny	7 weekend
30/07/10	Overcast and muggy, rain at end	6 flat midweek eve
29/07/11	Sunny and warm	6 flat midweek eve