

Newmarket - Rowley

Location, Parking and Access

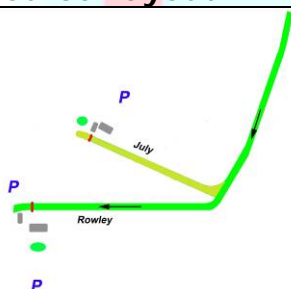


Located 14 miles from Cambridge the course is well signposted from a fair distance away. Follow the yellow racecourse signs as they will take you away from the town centre and extra congestion.

Parking is on grass and there is a free public car park or a premier car park for a £5 charge. 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 Rowley Mile course is a boomerang shape with a right handed dog-leg 1¼ miles from the finish. Generally flat with a dip two furlongs out. Races of 1m 4f 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.

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

Discounts: Seniors Group

Overview

In contrast to its more relaxed neighbour, the July Course, the Rowley Mile course has a much more formal feel to it.

There are three enclosures, although within the premier enclosure there are areas reserved for Jockey Club and Annual Members only. Unfortunately it is not always obvious where these areas are, as a result it is easy for the casual visitor to fall foul of the sometimes over fussy stewards.

At ground level the Premier enclosure is relatively small with an area near the finishing like, mainly hard standing but with a small lawned area.

There are a large number of garden benches for sitting.

The head-on stand, as the name implies offers head on viewing of the racing, although this is a slight misnomer as even from the main stand most viewing is effectively head-on. The public areas has both tiered viewing and seating. The second floor is reserved for the Thoroughbred Lounge badge holders.



The iconic Millennium Grandstand dominates the course and nearly all of it is reserved for the top enclosure patrons.

It has to be said this is a really stunning stand, very modern and with flowing lines.

Apart from one area reserved for owners and trainers the entire first and second floors are available for Premier badge holders. There is a balcony at the rear allowing good viewing of the parade ring. In addition there is seating to the front of the stand, on the second floor, although some of the seats are reserved for annual members.

Grandstand and Paddock customers only have access to part of the ground floor of the Millennium Stand, plus a tiered viewing area at the front of the stand. Viewing is as reasonable as it ever can be taking into account the course configuration. The area in front of the stand is predominately hard standing, with some grass near the rails.

The Rowley enclosure is somewhat basic with an old stand, which has seen better days, offering tiered viewing. And an additional uncovered tiered stand. Admission to this enclosure does not allow access to the parade ring.

The configuration of the course means that naked eye viewing is never going to be good, and the big screens are essential. Races of up to 1¼ miles are run along the straight, whilst longer races start on a dog leg.

There is a dyke at the end of the course near the dog leg, so runners in races longer than 1¼ miles will disappear from view at some time. From the second floor of the main stand it is possible to see the 2 mile start and the first couple of furlongs of the race, although you would need a good pair of binoculars.

The first inspections were midweek afternoon meetings and the course was relatively quiet and comfortable. At the bigger meetings it can get very crowded and almost uncomfortable.

There have been problems in the past with racegoers becoming somewhat the worse for wear and it is not unknown for ugly incidents to break out.

At the 1000 Guineas meeting some of the racegoers were getting rather loud, although the atmosphere was still generally good.

Yes this course has good quality racing, however I do find it hard to relax here. Unlike the July course, it does not always feel welcoming here and it is hard to relax. You almost feel as if you are walking on eggshells, risking offending someone, or going somewhere you shouldn't.

Catering

The Champions Gallery restaurant, on the third floor of the Grandstand, is the premier eating location, although it comes at a cost with prices starting from £110 (plus VAT).

The Bistro offers casual dining, bookings not always necessary, with an à-la-carte menu. Starters £5 - £6, Mains £13.95 - £19.00 and deserts £5.25 - £6.75. Some days they do have set-price deals

At a much more reasonable price level the Devils Dyke is a self-service restaurant on the ground floor of the main stand (and available to Premier and Grandstand patrons) offering good quality main meals, including healthy options, from £7.50 - £9.50. (Including the famous Newmarket sausages). Even better the food is served on china plates with proper knives and forks – anyone who has eaten at most other courses know where I am coming from here.

There is an array of mobile units, consisting of all the usual suspects, behind the stand. Including seafood (prawn curry £5, cold fish £3.50 - £4.80), fish and chips (£7.80), Noodle Bar (£4.00 - £6.50), hog roast (£6.20), pasty stall (£4.50), plus of course the ubiquitous burger stall (£7).

Bitter and Lager were both priced at £4

All in all a reasonable choice of options, redeemed especially by the Devils Dyke restaurant.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were 30 bookmakers standing operating (although the numbers had diminished by the last race) to an average over round of 1.71% a runner.

Racecard

A reasonable racecard costing £3. I have to confess I have previously been critical of the quality of racecards here, however things are now looking up.

There is plenty of editorial content and should you get bored with the racing, highly unlikely, there is even a crossword to keep you occupied.

Toilets

The toilets were clean and there were plenty of them.

Parade Ring



A large, attractive parade ring with plenty of seating and tiered viewing, as well as viewing balconies on the rear of the Grandstand.

The winners enclosure is within the parade ring and the pre-parade ring is almost adjacent.

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

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Ownership	Jockey Club
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Fixtures 2012
April 18th & 19th (Craven Meeting) May 5th & 6th (Guineas Meeting) May 17th, 18th & 19th September 22nd, 27th, 28th and 29th October 6th, 13th & 24th November 2nd & 3rd

Inspection Dates		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
02/11/07	Starting sunny becoming overcast	8 flat midweek
17/04/08	Sunny but very windy	7 flat midweek
04/05/08	Sunny	7 flat festival
14/05/10	Overcast	6 Flat Midweek
14/04/11	Overcast and breezy	8 flat midweek

