

Newton Abbot

Location, Parking and Access



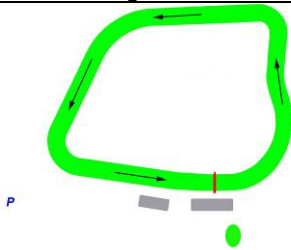
The racecourse is located close to the town centre which can make access difficult, especially when leaving during the rush hour, the congestion isn't helped by the presence of a large supermarket opposite the entrance to the course.

The course is close to the end of the M5 (leave at J31) and follow the A308 ... local signposts will guide you. From Plymouth take the A38, the A383 and A381 then follow the signposts.

Parking is on grass and free.

Newton Abbot station is on the Paddington to Penzance main line and it is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the course. There is a bus from the station, however it is a pleasant walk (providing it is not raining).

Course Layout



The track is left handed (anti-clockwise) and 1 mile 1 furlong round, it is flat throughout.

The turns are very tight and it favours nippy, front running types. It is another of those courses which throws up more than its fair share of course specialists.

The jumps are not too challenging, although they are less forgiving than they used to be.

Admission

The course operates a dual enclosure policy, Paddock (£18) or Course (£12)

Annual membership: £185

There is not any mention of any discounts on the course website.

Discounts: Unknown

Overview

The two enclosures are on the outside of the course. (Access used to be allowed to the centre of the course but is no longer available for safety reasons)

The main enclosure has a tiered grandstand with some seating on the upper level. Most of the seating is reserved for annual members, however there is some unreserved seating available on a "first come, first served" basis – this latter statement is important as once grabbed the seats are jealously guarded.



Viewing from the stands is excellent, indeed Newton Abbot arguably offers the best naked eye viewing of racing anywhere in the country. Even at ground level viewing is adequate, save that some of the far side is obscured by a building in the centre of the course and, more unfortunately, by some hideous bouncy castle type erections in the family play area, however once in the stands these do not have an impact on viewing.

The rear of the main stand has terrace viewing of the parade ring.

The course enclosure has a single stand offering tiered viewing with a number of benches for seating on the top row. Again there is good viewing from most of the stand, although one area at the top near end has the view of the finishing post obstructed by the main stand.

Both enclosures have a number of benches for seating at ground level (about ten in the main enclosure and around forty in the course enclosure)

Newton Abbot has taken the decision to concentrate on summer jumping, a decision no doubt made with one eye on the local tourist market. Taking

this option also brings a certain amount of responsibility to the executive, adding an additional pressure not applicable to other courses. Namely a large proportion of those attending are not regular racegoers, indeed I suspect a significant proportion are first time racegoers. There is no need to worry, as the course serves them well and offers a good experience for both the first time and seasoned racegoer.

It is a compact course with a warm welcome. The viewing is excellent and those in the course enclosure have the opportunity to be beside the final hurdle.

Refreshingly Newton Abbot is still owned and run by a small number of shareholders, unlike the majority of courses which come under the umbrella of one of the big three groups. This lends itself to a more intimate and personal feel and you aren't faced with any corporate branding. Newton Abbot is exactly what a small racecourse should be.

It was unfortunate that on the day of the inspection the weather had taken a turn for the worse and it did result in the size of the fields being decimated. I am sure it also deterred some from attending. Despite the poor weather there was still plenty of shelter.

Most people who only have a passing interest in racing will have only heard of the big courses like Ascot, Epsom or Aintree. The man in the street probably wouldn't even know there was a racecourse at Newton Abbot, that is a shame because it is the Newton Abbot's of this world that are the lifeblood of racing and, more importantly, the type of course best equipped to introduce new blood to the sport.

Their gamble to move to being a summer race course seems to have paid off and I wish them every success in the future. All I can say is do not wait until you are on holiday in the South West before visiting Newton Abbot, make a point of making a special trip. It is only 2½ hours from London by train, and as an added bonus the train journey from Exeter to Newton Abbot is very scenic.

Catering

Newton Abbot is one of those rare courses which caters for the full spectrum of tastes.

There are two main restaurants. The Winning Post restaurant offers course viewing, whilst the Paddock Restaurant overlooks, as the name suggests, the paddock. Booking for both is strongly recommended.

The jewel in the crown, as far as the general racegoer is concerned, is the Terrace Restaurant offering an excellent range of good meals for £8.90 each. The selections on offer are not the usual fare and would not be out of place at a good quality restaurant. They include lamb cutlets (which I can recommend), a seafood bake, a chicken dish, home made lasagne

and various other options. There was also a good range of salads on offer for £5.50. For those not wanting a full meal there was a range of sandwiches (£3.10), baguettes (£3.50) and cakes (£1.80 - £2.50).

In the main betting hall there is an outlet offering sandwiches, hot rolls etc.

In the course enclosure catering is the usual mobile units, including Jacket Potatoes (£2.50 - £3.50), and burgers (£3.50 - £4.00).

Bitter £3.00 and lager are £3.20 a pint and water a very reasonable £1.10 a bottle.

The range of food available at the course was very impressive and the food was also of a good quality.

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

There were two dozen bookmakers in the main enclosure with a further dozen in the course enclosure. Betting was to an average over round of a, not very generous, 1.9% a runner

Racecard

Costing £2.50, a nice racecard, in keeping with the course itself. The welcome from the MD, Patrick Masterson, is more interesting than the bland offering often found in other racecards. There is a guide to the facilities with a small diagram, if being picky the print on the plan is rather small (I needed my reading glasses).

If, for any reason, you do get bored there is a challenging crossword included in the card, the catch is the answers appear in the next racecard, so you will have to come back if you want the answers.

The race details themselves are of a different style to those generally found in other racecards, having said that the details are well presented and clear.

Toilets

Plenty of toilets with the only queues being at the end of racing. A minor word of warning – the hot water is very HOT!!!

Parade Ring



A basic parade ring which also serves as a pre-parade ring with saddling boxes at the far end. The winners enclosure is also included in the area.

This is certainly a very popular area with crowds often three or four deep viewing the action here.

Non Racing Attractions

The delights of the English Riviera are near to hand as well as the delights of both Devon and nearby Cornwall.

Contact Details

	www.newtonabbotracing.com
	01626 353235
	The Racecourse Newton Abbot Devon TQ12 3AF

Ownership	Private
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Fixtures 2012

March 18th
April 7th & 24th
May 10th, 21st & 30th
June 11th, 19th (eve) & 26th (eve)
July 9th & 22nd
August 4th & 22nd (eve)
September 1st, 2nd, 10th & 25th
October 1st & 12th

Inspection Dates		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
14/08/07	Dank with persistent drizzle	7 jump midweek
13/05/08	Warm and pleasant	6 jump midweek evening
12/05/09	Showery	6 jump midweek evening
11/05/10	Showery becoming sunny	6 jump midweek evening