

# Uttoxeter

## Location, Parking and Access

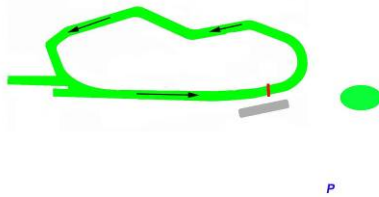


Getting to the track is easy, less than a mile from the A50 trunk road, Uttoxeter is located between Derby and Stoke. There are both permanent and temporary signs directing racegoers to the course. The final approach is a bit bleak as it takes you through an industrial estate, don't let that put you off.

Parking is on grass and you have to cross the railway line to get to the course entrance, although there are helpful Network Rail staff to assist you.

Having to cross the railway line may also give you a clue that Uttoxeter station is adjacent to the course. Inter-City trains operate to Derby and Stoke with local trains (hourly service) available from both stations.

## Course Layout



Uttoxeter is a kidney shaped, left handed (anti-clockwise) circuit of 1¼ miles. It has a spur from which some hurdle races start.

There are some undulations, especially in the back straight. Uttoxeter stages only jump racing.

Front runners and speedy gallopers are favoured by the course configuration.

## Admission

There are three enclosures at Uttoxeter, Premier (£20 - £22), Grandstand (£16 - £17) and Course (£8). Prices for the Midland Grand National in March see prices increase to £27 / £22 & £12 respectively.

Groups of 30+ qualify for a discount if booked in advance. A £3 OAP concession is available on the day. Accompanied under 16's are admitted free of charge.

Annual membership: Single £250 and OAP £230

**Discounts: Seniors  Group**

## Overview

In the Premier there are rather steep steepings, which obviously aids viewing, but it could be a bit tough on the knees. There is seating at the top of the stand

Viewing is generally good, although from the back row of the seats it is not possible to view the chase fences in the home straight. Even the big screen it thoughtfully designed in that there was a gap below the screen which enabled the horses to be seen as they passed behind it, although on the day of the second inspection there was no big screen – which was a disappointment.

The topology at Uttoxeter lends itself to good viewing and with a good pair of binoculars and the big screen the action can easily be followed. The stands, unlike some courses, are actually quite close to the track allowing you to feel close to the action.

In the Grandstand and Paddock enclosures, as in the Premier enclosure the steepings are also steep. Due to the layout of the course this part of the grandstand is a bit further back from the track but is still close enough to the action. The enclosure itself stretches all the way back to the last fence allowing racegoers to get close to the action, also some races start in this general area. There is an older stand near the last fence with slightly less cover and it has some bench seating at the top level.

However viewing from this stand is restricted and you are a good furlong from the finishing post.



Viewing from the main Grandstand is reasonable but from the older stand near the final fence views are restricted, not least by a huge temporary structure, which I presume is in place for the Midlands Grand national meeting, which was the next scheduled meeting after the review. Even at ground level a reasonable view is possible.

The Course enclosure is set in the centre of the course. This is a flat area with some raised, wooden viewing platforms. There is a bar / café which would provide some shelter but no viewing. Indeed viewing is very limited, to see a race develop you would need to watch the TV monitors.

In the winter the centre course was relatively clear and it possible to follow the action down the back straight. However in the height of summer views be severely restricted as it doubles up as a caravan park, for example the 2m 5f start cannot be seen from the stands.

Looking through this review it may seem I have been harsh with the review of Uttoxeter, the reason for this is I have measured my observations against the very high standards set by Northern Racing at all their courses and especially at Uttoxeter, which is considered the jewel in their crown.

Let's try and redress the balance a bit. Before Stan Clarke took over Uttoxeter it was dire, he turned it around and a lot of racecourses have learnt from his model.

The racegoer is generally made to feel welcome and this is evident from the moment you arrive. All the staff, well almost all – there was one exception – were invariably polite and even the one who was a bit brusque when my badge was hidden from sight was probably fed up standing in the bitter wind.

Another thing that strikes you about Uttoxeter is how clean it is, not that I am normally a litter lout but it's like Disneyland in that it's the sort of place you would naturally feel guilty about dropping litter.

Uttoxeter also has excellent is the signage. Signs for each of the enclosures are colour coded. Information boards abound, covering all aspects of racing, something really important for those who are not regular racegoers.

As I said the gripes are minor, Uttoxeter is a very good course, it's almost up there with the best of them.

### **Catering**

One pleasing aspect of Uttoxeter is the lack of greasy burger vans. There are a variety of food outlets catering for all tastes from a silver service 4 course meal to the ubiquitous burger but served from a fixed sales point.

The day of the first visit wasn't the busiest day of the year but in the Premier Enclosure's Café Quick the service was far from quick. As part of the classic race day package there was a voucher for afternoon tea .... getting the scone and food was easy, however if you wanted a cup of tea to go with it there was a 15 minute wait for the water to boil. Most of the time there was a young lad doing a sterling job trying to cope.

It must be said, to their credit, that when the queues did start to get long and patience started wearing a bit thin, extra staff were quickly bought in to assist. On the second visit, a quieter afternoon, the queues were not as bad.

Hoops Restaurant offers a three course meal for £36.

Various Outlets: Burgers £3.50 (with cheese £3.80), Beef or Pork: Baguette £5.80 Roll £4.80, Chicken Curry £6.00, chips £2.50, Panini's £4, jacket potatoes £3.00 plus 60p per topping. Sandwiches from £3.15

There is a pasty stall, with various fillings, at £3.50 each.

Lager and Bitter £3.30

## **Ancillaries**

### ***Bookmakers***

32 bookmakers were standing in the main enclosure with an additional eight in the course. Betting was to an average over round of 1.79% a runner.

### ***Racecard***

Cost £2.50. The plan of the course and facilities was clear and in colour, although I did not quite see the purpose of listing who the Annual Boxholders are, unless they are after some bragging rights.

The plan is followed by the usual information pages, although I do wonder why, with patrons already in the racecourse, they then go on to detail the admission charges in the racecard, is this because the racegoers may have forgotten?

It is a shame the card does not include trackfacts or a map showing the layout of the course.

Details of the races themselves were adequate and at least they were laid out on facing pages so all the runners in a race could be seen in the card without having to turn the page.

### ***Toilets***

Toilets, both male and female are adequate, clean and well stocked with soap etc.

They were busy but without undue queues, however I'm not sure how well they would cope on a feature day like the Midlands Grand National meeting.

### **Parade Ring**

The first area of the course you come across as you come through the main entrance. The pear shaped parade ring also includes the winners enclosure at the 'fat' end. One side fronts onto private boxes, however the remainder of the paddock is surrounded by seating, indeed a slightly more comfortable version of the usual button seating. Behind this seating at the 'fat' end there is also tiered viewing. A small pre-parade ring and saddling boxes are located



beyond the thin end. The centrepiece is a brilliant piece of topiary of a horse jumping the fence.

It's a pleasant paddock and the proof of this is the large number of racegoers who crowd round it before and after each race.

### **Non Racing Attractions**

For thrill seekers Alton Towers is not too far away.

### **Contact Details**

	<a href="http://www.uttoxeter-racecourse.co.uk">www.uttoxeter-racecourse.co.uk</a>
	01889 562561
	Uttoxeter Racecourse Wood Lane Uttoxeter Staffordshire ST14 8BD

<b>Ownership</b>	Northern Racing
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### **Fixtures 2012**

January 28th  
February 11th  
March 17th & 31st  
April 26th (eve)  
May 5th, 13th & 19th (eve)  
June 3rd, 7th (eve) & 14th (eve)  
July 1st, 10th (eve), 18th, 26th & 30th (eve)  
September 12th & 23rd  
October 7th & 18th  
November 2nd, 17th & 29th  
December 21st & 31st

<b>Inspection Dates</b>		
<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Weather</i></b>	<b><i>Type</i></b>
27/01/07	Dry but chilly	6 weekend
24/07/08	Sunny and warm	6 midweek
15/07/09	Variable, sunshine and showers	7 midweek
16/04/10	Sunny	6 midweek evening
29/01/11	Broken cloud but chilly	7 weekend

