

Windsor

Location, Parking and Access



Located outside of the town, take the A308 Maidenhead Road from the town

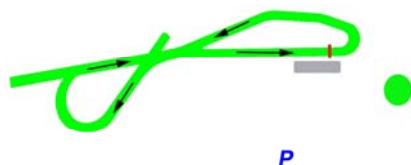
Parking is on grass. Public (Free), Members (£7). Cars into the silver ring are charged at £10.

Local police implement a traffic management scheme allowing easy access to the course. Only minor gripe is if coming from Windsor / M4 then you have to turn right across oncoming traffic. A traffic officer outside the entrance would help with the traffic flow.

On the busiest days exiting the course can be a real pain, at the Bank Holiday meeting it took 45 mins to escape.

There are two stations in Windsor. Windsor and Eton Riverside served from London Waterloo and Windsor and Eton Central served from Paddington via Slough. Both services are half hourly taking 56 and 25 minutes respectively. From the station there is a shuttle bus, however the riverboat is a more relaxing alternative, taking 10 minutes.

Course Layout



Windsor is a perfectly flat figure of eight course.

The unusual configuration of the track means that horses who have run well here previously should be followed. 5 and 6 furlong races are effectively run on a straight course. Late running long striding horses tend to do well.

Draw Advantage: for 5-6f races low numbers have an advantage when the ground is fast but high numbers hold the advantage when the going is soft. (was the opposite way round prior to the 2011 season when the stall numbering system changed)

Admission

Windsor has three enclosures, Members (£24), Tattersalls (£20) and Course (£11). Disabled and accompanied under 16's are admitted free of charge. Annual membership: £264

Dress Code: There is a dress code in the Club Enclosure and Castle and Club Restaurants. Smart jeans (no rips, tears or fraying) are acceptable but shorts, t-shirts, sports attire and trainers are not permitted and we do ask that men wear a collared shirt.

Discounts: Advanced Disabled Group

Overview

Windsor has a big problem, it effectively built on an island, surrounded on three sides by the River Thames this means the racecourse has been built to fit in with the available land. As a result the course is two loops forming a figure of eight with one of the loops effectively being behind the stands, thus making viewing a pain. The racecourse themselves then conspire to further mess up the viewing by, on various occasions, sticking big screens, bouncy castles and marquees in the centre of the course, thus obstructing any decent viewing of the first two furlongs of the 1 mile 3 furlong races.



In the Members enclosure access is good, although the steps are a little steep but are manageable, hand rails are provided though. There is some seating and the stand is fully under cover. Viewing could be better, most of the course can be seen, although about 1 furlong of the loop cannot be seen and about ¼ mile down the back straight was partially obscured by the hospitality tent or bouncy castle.

There is seating in the centre course which gives much better viewing, however there is no protection from the elements. On the day of the inspection temperatures were around 32° and it was very uncomfortable in the area. (On a previous visit this seating did afford the best views of racing) (Additional note during evening racing the sun will be shining in your eyes whilst viewing from this point)



In Tattersalls, again access is OK, reasonably flat and the stepping are not too steep.

In terms of viewing, the steppings are relatively low, the upper reaches of the Grandstand are reserved for the restaurant and hospitality boxes. Viewing is reasonable, although will be restricted if standing next to a tall / large person. There is a tiered area adjacent to the main grandstand for disabled viewing and containing some chairs. Visibility is not that good.

Viewing of the loop is limited from all areas as is viewing of the far side of the course

The Silver Ring, once again, has easy access and a flat enclosure. Viewing is frankly terrible, unless you're standing by the rail you won't see much of the race live. You will be better off watching it on the Big Screen.

Royal Windsor Racecourse is the place to be seen on any summer Monday evening. City Slickers and Sloan Rangers mix with ordinary racing fans to unwind after a hard day at the office. Sumptuous picnics abound and the champers and Pimms flow.

As an aside there is racing taking place as well and, on occasion, the quality can be reasonable.

If you want to go and actually see the racing then you may be disappointed. If, however, you want a pleasant summer evening by the Thames in a party atmosphere then you can do far worse than spend an evening at Windsor races.

I have just remembered another disadvantage of evening racing at Windsor ... as the sun goes down it shines down the home straight from behind the horses so the one part of the track where the racing can be seen is taken out by the bright sun ... how the commentators manage I'll never know. (well actually I do ... they do the commentary from a TV monitor)

If you do just want to chill I can thoroughly recommend the garden hammocks scattered around the Club Enclosure, you won't see much racing but if you want to people watch it's the way to do it. Perhaps I am being overly critical of Windsor, it does have a lot going for it but it is severely constrained by its geography and, all in all they have made a good job of things.

Catering

The food and drink options at Windsor are a cut above what is usually found at a racecourse. True there are the usual burger vendors if that floats your boat but there also a more upmarket choice available and some of it reasonably priced.

There are two restaurants in the club enclosure with the Castle Restaurant overlooking the track and offering packages at £82.50 or £95.00 a head, (the latter has a seafood platter and champagne), on "Family" days a £49.50 carvery package is available. The Club Restaurant has the disadvantage of no viewing but that is countered by its superb ambience and the finishing line is only a short walk away. Packages cost £52.50 (two course) or £57.50 (three course).

There is the Blues and Royals seafood restaurant in the Club Enclosure offering an à la carte menu, minimum spend £15.

The paddock lawn is surrounded by various food outlets which vary from meeting to meeting. At the most recent visit in June 2011 the following outlets were available.

A Mexican outlet had the likes of nachos (£4) and fajita's (£5), there was a burger stall with various Burgers (£5 - £6.50) or hot dogs £3.80. An oriental outlet (£5.50 - £6.50). A barbecue with prices around a fiver and a seafood stall with prices from £2 through to £7.

Come the drink it will be no surprise to hear that Pimms and champagne abound as Windsor racing is as much a social occasion as it is a race meeting.

Indoors there is an outlet selling the usual burgers and the like as well as baguettes (cold filled - £4.30 and hot filled (£5.10) or sandwiches for £2.90

There is a fish and chip shop behind the stand with fish for £4.70, pies for £3.30 and chips for £2.50.

Lager is £4.00 as is bitter and water is £2 a bottle.

(Prices correct as at April 2012)

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

A reasonable number of bookmakers stand with around 25 in the main ring and a further 15 in the course enclosure. Betting is to an average of 1.7% a runner, not the most generous around.

Racecard

Cost £2 56 pages 16 pages of advertising. There is a good colour map of the course and enclosures, followed by the usual information pages. This is followed by a very good racing phrase book.

The layout of the race cards was clear with colours and for the two big races on the card, photographs of the jockeys were also included. The tipster managed to provide two of the six winners.

At the May 2008 meeting the racecard was even better, with jockey photographs for all the races – all in all one of the best racecards I have seen in many a long day.

Toilets

The toilets in the Club Enclosure are worthy of special mention. More like the toilets of a gentlemen's club. Wood panelled, lovely old basins, even a hairbrush and a dab of aftershave available. The other toilets are adequate.

Parade Ring

The large tree lined paddock is probably one of the most attractive in the country. A double barrier gives the feeling of being distanced from the runners, however all in all a pretty paddock with views of the river and Windsor Castle in the background.

However, there is one big disadvantage with the parade ring in that the runners parade the "wrong way round." This means the horse attendants are walking on the far side of the horses. Now this isn't a problem if the horses are wearing their saddle cloths, so they can be identified. If, on the other hand, they are wearing rugs it is nigh on impossible to identify the runners as the handlers armbands will not be visible.

The winners enclosure is separate from the parade ring.

Non Racing Attractions

Clearly Windsor itself, with the castle is an attraction in its own right.

For those with a sense of history Runnymede, where the Magna Carta was signed is only a stones throw away and, of course, London is only half an hour away by train.

Contact Details

	www.windsor-racecourse.co.uk
	0870 2200024
	The Racecourse Maidenhead Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 5JJ

Ownership	Arena
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Fixtures 2012

(All meetings are evening meetings, unless otherwise stated)

April 16th (aft), 23rd & 30th

May 7th (aft), 14th, 21st & 28th

June 9th, 11th, 18th, 25 & 30th (aft)

July 1st (aft), 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd

August 20th & 25th

October 8th (aft), 15th (aft) & 22nd (aft)

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
02/07/06	Very hot and sunny	6 Flat weekend
05/05/08	Hot and sunny	6 flat weekend
06/04/09	Sunny becoming overcast	6 Flat midweek
12/04/10	Overcast, some spits and spots	7 flat midweek
06/06/11	Broken cloud and warm	6 Flat midweek
23/04/12	Overcast and showery	6 flat midweek

